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STORY OF THE CIVIL WAR

A CONCISE ACCOUNT OF THE WAR IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BETWEEN 1861 AND 1865

U.S.
His

BY

JOHN CODMAN ROPES

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"The Campaign of Waterloo," etc.

WITH MAPS AND PLANS

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PART I.

TO THE OPENING OF THE CAMPAIGNS OF 1862

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

NEW YORK

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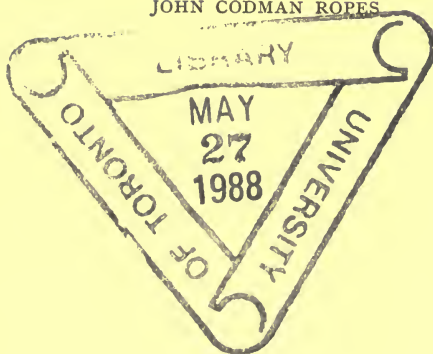
27 WEST TWENTY-THIRD STREET

24 BEDFORD STREET, STRAND

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PREFACE.

THE task attempted in the following work is in certain respects a novel one. It is to write of the subjects treated from the stand-point of each of the contending parties.

In my judgment the war should not be so depicted as to imply that the North and the South differed and quarrelled about the same things. That was not the fact. The questions presented to the men of the North were not the same as those with which their Southern contemporaries had to deal.

This might be very fully illustrated by referring to the relation which the institution of slavery bore to the people of the North, as compared with its relation to the people of the South; but into this subject the scope of our narrative will not allow us to go.

I will illustrate what I mean by calling attention to the fact that the State held a totally different place in the political thought of the South from what it occupied in that of the North. Mr. Trescot, Assistant Secretary of State in Mr. Buchanan's administration, in his account of the discussions in the Cabinet in the autumn of 1860, gives a forcible picture of this fundamental difference when he is describing the

position of his immediate chief, General Cass, then Secretary of State :¹

“Not recognizing any right in a State to secede except as a revolutionary measure, he would have resisted the attempt at the commencement, and, as the sworn officer of the United States, he would have done his utmost to preserve its integrity. ‘I speak to Cobb’, he would say, ‘and he tells me he is a Georgian; to Floyd, and he tells me he is a Virginian; to you, and you tell me you are a Carolinian. I am not a Michigander; I am a citizen of the United States’.”

Such radical differences as these actually existed among the representative statesmen of the country in the year 1860, however difficult it may be for the present generation to appreciate the fact. It is not possible to exaggerate the importance of these conceptions of political duty; for they directly affected the attitude of every man towards the questions of the day. If a man held that his State was his country, it was his duty, if he proposed to be a patriotic citizen, to serve under the flag of his State.

This book is written with the strong conviction that neither the lapse of time nor the fortunate result of the war ought to prevent us from getting at the exact truth on any matter connected with its origin or incidents. There is no attempt to minimize the differences of opinion which separated the people of that time into two hostile camps. The best service that the historian can render is to set forth, as nearly as he can, the exact facts, taking account of all matters

¹ Crawford, 23.

that justice requires should be weighed, and that a regard for truth demands should be clearly set forth.

The ensuing work aims in the first place to state the political positions of the contending parties at the outbreak of the war, and, in the second place, to give a general view of the whole struggle, showing the objects of the different campaigns, and their relations to each other, and describing, as fully as has seemed to the author desirable, the more important movements and battles. Subjects which it is thought require special attention are treated of in notes to the chapters. It is hoped that the reader will be able to obtain a general view of the contest, and to see its events in their proper order and perspective. For the details of this long and terrible war, recourse must of course be had to fuller histories, or, in the last resort, to that wonderful receptacle of all, or nearly all, that can be known about its incidents,—the War Records, which our Government, with a liberality and impartiality wholly without precedent in the history of the world, has published and distributed at the public charge.

J. C. R.

99 MOUNT VERNON STREET :

BOSTON : 1 September, 1894.





TABLE OF CONTENTS.

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| CHAPTER I: The States and the Union | I |
| Notes to Chapter I | 10 |
| CHAPTER II: The Question of the Southern Forts | 17 |
| Notes to Chapter II | 26 |
| CHAPTER III: South Carolina Alone | 29 |
| Notes to Chapter III | 56 |
| CHAPTER IV: The New Confederacy. | 65 |
| CHAPTER V: The Accession of Mr. Lincoln | 73 |
| Notes to Chapter V | 88 |
| CHAPTER VI: The Call to Arms | 90 |
| CHAPTER VII: The Opposing Parties | 98 |
| Note to Chapter VII | 108 |
| CHAPTER VIII: The Military Situation | 111 |
| CHAPTER IX: The Battle of Bull Run | 121 |
| Notes to Chapter IX | 157 |
| CHAPTER X: Plans and Preparations: The East, the Atlantic Coast, and the Gulf | 161 |
| CHAPTER XI: Plans and Preparations: The West | 187 |
| Notes to Chapter XI | 213 |
| CHAPTER XII: Lincoln and McClellan | 217 |
| Notes to Chapter XII | 257 |

LIST OF MAPS.

(AT END OF VOLUME.)

1. CHARLESTON HARBOR.
2. CAMPAIGN OF BULL RUN :
Positions of the Federal and Confederate armies on July 18,
1861.
3. THE FIELD OF BULL RUN :
Positions of the Federal and Confederate armies on the even-
ing of July 20, 1861.
4. KENTUCKY AND TENNESSEE :
Positions of the Federal and Confederate armies on January
1, 1862.
5. THE COAST OF VIRGINIA.



LIST OF WORKS CITED, WITH THEIR ABBREVIATIONS.

THESE works are cited in the ensuing book by the words or letters which are in this list printed in capitals, and all works are cited after the usage which prevails in legal literature,—that is, the words “volume” and “page” are omitted, the number of the volume is prefixed to the title, and the number of the page follows it. In citing the War Records, the serial number of the volume only is given. This was first printed on the back of the 36th serial number, which, according to its regular description, bears the cumbrous title of Series I, Vol. XXIV., Part 1. Why the volumes were not numbered in simple arithmetical order, we have never been able to conjecture. It would greatly have simplified the task of the historian. The only comfortable way to do is to paste the numbers on the backs of the first thirty-five volumes; the government-printers have printed the “serial numbers” on the backs of all the rest.

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The later editions, although bearing the same date, have a valuable Table of Contents following the Table of References to Cases.

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JOHNSTON : The Life of General Albert Sidney Johnston, embracing his services in the armies of the United States, the Republic of Texas, and the Confederate States. By William Preston Johnston. With illustrations on steel and wood. New York : D. Appleton & Co. 1879.

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C. S. A. Illustrated by Steel-plates and Maps. New York : D. Appleton & Co. 1874.

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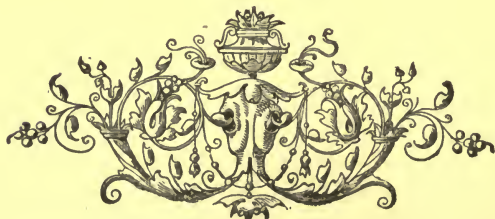
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THE STORY OF THE CIVIL WAR



THE STORY OF THE CIVIL WAR.

CHAPTER I.

THE STATES AND THE UNION.

THE main object of this book is to give a succinct and intelligible narrative of the military events of the late civil war. An account of the causes which brought the two great sections of our country to the point where their differences assumed such a shape that the Cotton States undertook to leave the Union, and even war became not only possible but imminent, lies entirely outside of the scope of this work. Yet, in order that we may gain the right stand-points from which to view the contest, we must ascertain, as nearly as we can, the exact legal and political positions occupied by the opposing parties at the outbreak of the conflict. To this, therefore, we will first devote our attention.

It was claimed by the advocates of the right of secession,¹ that the United States was not a single

¹ A clear statement of their views is contained in Part II. of Jefferson Davis's *Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government*, vol I., pp. 86 *et seq.*

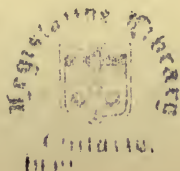
nation, but a collection of nations, united for certain purposes and for the general convenience and profit, under an arrangement or treaty known as the Constitution of the United States. It was not denied—at least, it was not seriously denied—that the original thirteen States, when they adopted the Constitution, intended it to be of perpetual validity; nor was it denied that the States which had subsequently been admitted into the Union came in with the expectation of remaining in it forever. But it was maintained that, if the original thirteen States were, when the Revolutionary War came to an end, thirteen independent nations, like England or France, the Constitution was, and, in fact, could not have been anything but a treaty between them, since there was no amalgamation of the States effected by it, and since the government instituted by it was not established on an independent and self-sustaining basis, but on the contrary required the constant voluntary action of the different States to keep it in operation. If, then, the Constitution was a treaty between sovereign nations, it was plain that any one of the parties to it might, in the exercise of its sovereign power, at any time withdraw from that treaty. In thus acting, it might lay itself open, very possibly, to severe animadversion; it might incur blame, and deserve blame. The hostile feeling against it might even bring about a war. But still, having acted clearly within its rights as an independent nation, the nation thus withdrawing from the treaty was, whether right or wrong in its conduct, clearly entitled, according to the law of nations, to

the allegiance of all its inhabitants. This was the argument of those of the original thirteen States which passed ordinances of secession in 1860 and 1861; and it was generally conceded that the case of the States admitted subsequently to the original thirteen might be left to stand or fall with that of their elder sisters.

The attitude, then, which the seceding States assumed towards the States which remained in the Union was that of foreign nations, as one by one they adopted their ordinances of secession, and withdrew their Senators and Representatives from Congress. And there can be no reasonable doubt that when, in any State, the ordinance of secession had been adopted, the people of that State—or the great majority of them at least—felt that their allegiance was now due solely to their State¹; and even those persons who had strongly and earnestly opposed the secession movement, whether on grounds of policy or on grounds of right, felt themselves none the less bound loyally to serve their State, now that it had seceded.

All this it is of the greatest importance to know, and continually to bear in mind, if we would understand the attitude of the Southern people during the war. They were not, in their own opinion, *rebels* at all; they were defending their States—that is, the *nations* to which they conceived themselves to belong—from invasion and conquest. The charac-

¹ The populations of East Tennessee and West Virginia, which were so situated through the geographical features of their respective States as to have little in common with the bulk of their peoples, constitute notable exceptions to the remarks in the text.



ter which this conviction of the Southern people gave to the contest was most noticeable ; it is not too much to say that none of the usual features of a rebellion were to be perceived in the South during the war. There was, for instance, nothing in the temper of the South to suggest that the war was carried on for the redress of grievances—as is always the case among a rebellious population. On the contrary, the attitude of the South was from the beginning one of resistance to the uttermost ; it was, in fine, the attitude of a nation, repelling invasion, dismemberment, conquest. And, we repeat, it is of the first importance that we should recognize the grounds of this well-nigh universal feeling among the Southern people, if we would understand the causes of the unanimity and devotion with which they, for four long years, withstood the armies of the United States.

The populations of the States which remained in the Union, though of many different minds during the winter of 1860 and 1861, were yet, after the war had fairly commenced, substantially agreed upon a policy of active interference. Without concerning themselves to dispute the truth of the contention that the original thirteen States were, when they adopted the Constitution, thirteen independent nations, the Northern people were very certain that in 1861 at any rate the United States constituted but one nation. They were not very clear as to the legal or the political effect on a State of an ordinance of secession, but they were very clear indeed that the United States Government lost none of its

jurisdiction by reason of such an act having passed a State legislature. The feeling that they were citizens of a great country, inheritors of a noble history, charged with the important task of preserving intact the great republic of the world, inspired the people of the North with a determination to maintain the integrity of the nation, at any cost. People spoke in the language of the time of "preserving the Union"; the expression was not strictly logical, perhaps, but its meaning was plain. It meant that the Northern people were determined to maintain the existing political system over the whole length and breadth of the land, as well by preserving the autonomy of the States as by maintaining the authority of the National Government. Hence the apparent contradiction in terms involved in the phrase above referred to—war for the Union—did not greatly trouble the Northern public. It was in vain that opponents of the war pointed out that a war could not be seriously waged against a power with the object of compelling it to enter into a state of peace and union with its opponent; the meaning of the phrase was sufficiently well apprehended, although it was not always clearly stated; it was, as we have said above, a formula, expressive of the intention of the Northern people to maintain, or re-establish, by force of arms, substantially the same condition of things over the whole country which existed before the secession of the Southern States, so far, at least, as the relations of the States to the National Government were concerned.

It is plain from what has been said that the war

enlisted the patriotic feelings, properly so called, of both the contending parties. The North was inspired with a lofty determination to be true to the duty of maintaining in all its integrity the great Republic of the Western continent; the South was equally resolute to defend the independence of her several nationalities.

These differences were irreconcilable. The North could not admit the contention of the South. She denied the right of secession; in her view, the seceding States were States in insurrection. The parties were thus from the outset hopelessly at variance regarding the very terms of the controversy.

But the nature of the task which lay before the people of the North—its extent, its peculiar character, its difficulties—were necessarily determined by the attitude assumed by the South. It was futile for the North to endeavor to persuade herself that the task before her was that of suppressing an ordinary rebellion,—one, too, for which it was impossible for the South to allege any sufficient justification. The task before the North was a very different one from this, and one which involved vastly more difficulty. The secessionists did not rely on the discontent arising from unredressed grievances. They maintained that their States, having always had a clear right to secede from the Union whenever they might choose to do so, and take their places among the nations of the earth, had done so for reasons sufficient to themselves, and therefore could now rely on the patriotic feeling of their respective populations to maintain their independence by force of arms.

The North, therefore, if it undertook to fight for the re-establishment of the Union, was forced to commence a war of conquest. No other phrase can so precisely describe the kind of war which the North must prosecute, or else acquiesce in the permanent dissolution of the Union. The theory of the national sovereignty of each individual State was diametrically opposed to the theory of the single national sovereignty of the great Republic. The United States could no longer be considered a nation, if the claims of the seceding States were to be tolerated. The "country," hitherto, throughout the North at any rate, regarded as unquestionably extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, was, so it now appeared, a dream. It had never really existed. The patriotism directed towards it was in fact nothing but a strong desire for the continuance of an advantageous treaty between the various nations situated within the above-described territory. The great nation, free in its laws and traditions, preserving by an admirable system the privileges of local self-government and the general supervision and control which alone can insure a consistent policy on matters of public importance, had suddenly disappeared, so it was said, from the face of the earth. What wonder that the Northern people revolted at such conclusions, refused to tolerate the arguments by which they were supported, and determined to put forth all their strength, to crush all opposition, and to re-establish the unquestioned sovereignty of the one only nation throughout the length and breadth of the land?

When we add to this that a majority of the people of the Northern States regarded the secession of the Cotton States as unquestionably brought about for the purpose of establishing a new Confederacy, of which the institution of slavery should be the distinguishing feature,¹ it is not difficult to see why the North should have entered into the war with a clear conscience. Not that the war was waged by the North for the purpose of abolishing slavery in the South; that was certainly not the case; the war was prosecuted to put down all resistance to the National Government; but the fact that these inadmissible claims to independence were set up by communities which professed devotion to the institution of slavery, a system repugnant to the enlightenment and humanity of the age, drew to the Union side the moral approval of the great mass of the Northern people.

While this moral sentiment in regard to slavery strongly reinforced the patriotic determination of the Northern people, their opponents derived strength and courage from their belief that the war waged against them was an unjust and unprovoked war; they had, they maintained, a perfect right to leave the Union; they had done so; and now they were attacked and invaded; they were perfectly right in defending themselves.

Such, in a few words, were the positions of the conflicting parties at the outbreak of the war. Much more certainly might be said; but we have here men-

¹ "This stone [the subordination of the inferior race] 'is become the chief of the corner'—the real 'corner-stone'—in our new edifice." Speech of Vice-President Stephens, March 21, 1861. 2, Stephens, 85, 86.

tioned—though briefly—the principal opinions and sentiments which gave to the Northern and Southern armies respectively, their determination to fight, and which maintained that determination under all sorts of hardships and discouragements for four long weary years. The courage and endurance displayed by both sides were wonderful indeed; and it is clearly desirable that the sources and springs of so much valor and so much fortitude should be distinctly identified.



NOTES TO CHAPTER I.

1. The distinction between the right of a nation to withdraw from a treaty, and the right of a part of a nation to rebel and undertake to set up for itself as another nation, is one most important to bear in mind in our study of this period. To withdraw from a treaty, although the act may give umbrage to the nation or nations immediately concerned, is nevertheless an unquestionable right of any and every nation; and although a nation may become involved in war through an unnecessary, impolitic, or even unprincipled exercise of this right, its claim to the allegiance of its population remains unimpaired. Any person in that nation who refuses his aid to the government, or gives aid to the enemy, acts treasonably. But the right of revolution can only be said to exist at all when there is a moral justification for it; and those inhabitants of a district who cannot find that justification for rebellion which their neighbors profess to find are unquestionably bound to oppose the incipient revolution. Hence in a rebellion there are always two parties in the rebellious district,—the loyal people and the rebels; while in a war between two nations, it is rare to find anything but perfect loyalty among the populations on both sides.

It was the latter state of facts that existed for the

most part in the late civil war ; because, even though it may be true that the Southern view of the subject was historically unsupported, and by consequence that the people of the States which seceded were really in rebellion, yet the great majority of them did not think so themselves, but on the contrary held most stoutly and honestly to the dogma that their States were alone entitled to their allegiance,—that is, that their States were really nations, each possessed of full sovereignty. There were, it is true, in the Border States, considerable communities which adhered to the Union, as in West Virginia and East Tennessee. But in the other portions of these States and in the Cotton States, there was a substantial unanimity of opinion and action.

2. It follows from the above considerations that, in writing this history, it is not necessary to prefix to the military narrative an account of the causes of the war. We may, with perfect propriety, deal with our subject exactly as if we were undertaking to describe a war between two nations. If the movement in the South had been prosecuted as a rebellion, strictly so called, in the interest of the slave-owners, the case would be different. Then, we certainly should be obliged to give some account of the nature and extent of the grievances alleged by the rebels, in order that we might be able to estimate correctly the strength of the disloyal party. But we do not have to deal with that case.

It is no doubt true, and in fact it has never been questioned, that, had slavery not existed, the Cotton and Gulf States would not have seceded ; and, if they

had not seceded, it is certain that none of the Border States would have undertaken to leave the Union. Yet, while slavery was unquestionably the cause—directly or indirectly—of the assertion of their independence by the eleven States, the acceptance by the Southern people generally of the theory of the nationality of each State, produced, after the secession of their States and the commencement of hostilities, a condition of things substantially the same as that which we find in an ordinary war between two nations—that is, the line between the parties was drawn practically with the same distinctness, and it was coincident, in the main, at least, with geographical boundaries. An inquiry into the causes of the war of secession, therefore, will not aid us in our examination of its military problems and incidents. It is not necessary in this work to attempt the history of the slavery-question.

3. A few words on the theory, so universally accepted at the South, that the United States was not one nation, but a collection of nations, will not be out of place. The question is, it will be conceded, a question of fact. And its answer may well depend on the answer to another question, namely,—what was the result of the Revolutionary War? Was it to add one, or to add thirteen, to the then existing family of nations? It seems reasonably certain that, as a matter of historical fact, only one nation then came into existence. If this be so, then unquestionably this nation has always since existed. It was certainly a nation of peculiar composition, for it was composed of thirteen severally independent and autonomous

communities ; but if no one of them ever acted or claimed to act, severally and by itself, as a nation, and if, in fact, no one of them ever had any existence at all except as a colony of Great Britain or as one of the United States of America, there is nothing impossible in the conclusion that they, together, constituted but one nation. It was this nation, composed of these thirteen coequal States, that carried through to a successful termination the war of Independence, and which, acting also by the States of which it was composed, adopted the Constitution, and enacted it as "the law of the land". We have not space here, nor is this the place, to call attention to the many facts and considerations which bear upon this most interesting subject.¹ We will, however, remark that, if this be the true view to take of the facts, it is plain that a State which seceded simply abdicated its position in the nation, as one of its coequal rulers, and that the control of the nation, whose territory and population could not be diminished by the action of the seceding State until it had not only abdicated its position in the Union but had also become another nation by establishing its independence by force of arms, vested at once in the remaining States.

As throwing light on the question asked above in respect to the political result of the Revolutionary War, we may ask what would have been the result of our late civil war if the Southern Confederacy had succeeded ? Would it have been to add one, or

¹ This view is fully presented in Hurd's *Theory of our National Existence*, ch. iv., Boston : Little, Brown & Co., 1881 ; and *The Union State*, by the same author, New York : D. Van Nostrand Co. 1890.



to add eleven, to the then existing family of nations? To our mind, this question answers itself. At what moment of time could Mississippi, for instance, have been properly called a nation?¹ The recognition of the South would have been simply the recognition of the fact that the Southern Confederacy had conquered a place among the nations of the earth.² It is safe to say that there would not have been a publicist in the civilized world, outside of the limits of the eleven States, who would have dreamt of asserting that by the recognition of the Confederacy each of its States had established a right to be termed a nation. If this be so, the answer to our question as to the result of the Revolutionary War is made plain. And if but one nation was established as the result of that war, but one nation existed within the limits of the United States in 1861.

4. We have alluded to the fact that the people of the North were by no means of one mind in their views of the political situation during the winter that preceded the war. For this there were many reasons, to one or two of which only we will refer.

In the first place, the Northern people had not studied the question with anything like the attention which had been given to it in the South. For many years before the war the South had felt its

¹ Texas, however, was, at the time of her admission to the Union in 1845, an independent nation.

² General Beauregard's apostrophe to his "country", in his Report of the First Battle of Bull Run,—2 W. R., 493,—can hardly have been addressed to his State,—Louisiana. It was evidently the Confederate States that he was thinking of as his "country." He therefore must have conceived of them as constituting but one nation.

position in the Union a somewhat difficult one. The institution of slavery gave a very strong coloring to social and political life in the Southern States; and slavery was regarded by a large part of the Northern people with undisguised hostility. Hence the question of remaining in the Union had, in one form or another, received a great deal of attention in the South, and their people were familiar with the arguments in general use relating to the subject.

It was wholly different in the North. It was nearly fifty years since the right to leave the Union had been seriously asserted in any part of the North; and the views and arguments of the members of the Hartford Convention had long been forgotten. It is true that Mr. Webster had, thirty years before the war, replied to the Nullification theories of Calhoun and Hayne. But these were not the theories now put forward by Jefferson Davis and his colleagues.

The Northern statesmen had not in fact thoroughly considered the matter. Some of them tried to believe that there would be no need of their ever considering it,—the storm, they said, would soon blow over. Others, having in view the magnitude of the task of overrunning the South, favored a speedy recognition of the seceding States. Others again favored peace, from an inability to see how “a sovereign State” could be coerced into remaining in or returning into the Union. There were still others who were determined to resist by force the claims of the disunionists, and to preserve the integrity of the nation even at the cost of war. But it is probable that the greater part of the public men of

the North, while wholly averse to the dismemberment of the Union, could hardly be said to anticipate an offensive war against the South. They were, however, unwilling to surrender the forts on the Southern coast to the States within whose borders they were situated. Their policy seems to have been a waiting policy; but whether they looked forward to a return of the Cotton States to the Union, or to a war in which these States would be the aggressors, is not very clear.

Meantime, no one knew how the masses of the Northern people viewed the whole question. The event was to show that the masses knew very little and cared less about the theory of the matter, but that the sentiment of devotion to the United States as their country, and the belief that their country comprehended within its borders all the seceding States, were unexpectedly and overwhelmingly strong.





CHAPTER II.

THE QUESTION OF THE SOUTHERN FORTS.

THE positions of the parties to the controversy being, as we have seen, thus diametrically opposed, a collision was almost certain, sooner or later, to occur. The control of the Southern forts was naturally the first question demanding settlement. Let us look at it from the standpoint occupied by each of the parties.

The States which seceded held, it must be remembered, the theory that the United States was not a single nation, but a collection of nations, which had for many years acted for certain purposes through an agency known as the Government of the United States. To this Government tracts of land had been ceded by the different States, that on them might be erected light-houses, forts, arsenals, court-houses, post-offices, and the like, all subserving the general welfare, and particularly that of the State making the cession. These buildings had all been erected at the public expense, and by the General Government. The munitions of war, the money, the public property, contained in them belonged to the General Government as the agent of all the States united. They were, so to speak, partnership prop-

erty, and the title to this property stood in the name of the agent of all the parties belonging to the firm.

If this view of the matter had been universally accepted, and if the right of a State to secede at its own will from the federation had been also universally conceded, it would also no doubt have been generally granted that the forts, arsenals, post-offices and other public buildings lying within the territory of a State which had withdrawn from the Union ought to be turned over to that State, on the ground that these structures were situated within her borders, and ought in the nature of things to be within her sole control, and no longer in the control of the Federal Government, which was now in fact the agent of the other States only. The seceding State would be expected to enter into an accounting with the States from whose society she had withdrawn; and in this accounting she would be charged with the value of the property turned over to her, and with her proportion of the public debt, and credited with her contributions towards the erection of forts, light-houses, and other public buildings lying within the limits of the other States; and the balance would be paid by the party from whom it was found to be due. All this would, no doubt, have been done, at least substantially, if the theory of the right of secession had been universally accepted.

But this was very far from being the case. A large majority of the people of the North denied the right of a State to leave the Union. It was true that but few persons spoke of taking decided action against the seceding States; still there was nothing

that looked like conceding their position to be correct. President Buchanan in his Message to Congress on December 3, 1860, expressly denied the right of secession. It is true, he also stated it to be his opinion that the Constitution had not conferred on the general government the power to coerce a State to remain in the Union. But he still maintained the unimpaired right of the Federal Government to execute its laws within a State which had seceded; and he announced his intention of collecting the revenue, and holding and, if necessary, defending by force of arms the forts and other public property. And Mr. Buchanan was certainly one of the least radical statesmen in the Democratic party of the North. If no word dropped from his lips to encourage the hope that the North would consent to a peaceable dissolution of the Union, it was not likely that any good grounds existed for encouraging such a hope. Peace, assuredly, Mr. Buchanan was continually recommending; to a civil war he was unquestionably most averse; he would have the North make almost any sacrifice of its position on the slavery-question in order to reassure the Border States and induce the Cotton States to return. But Mr. Buchanan never recommended the North to acquiesce in the secession of the Cotton States, nor did he ever yield an iota on the point of the abstract right of the Federal Government to maintain its hold on all the Southern forts.

Nor was the action of Congress any more favorable to the claims of the secessionists. It is true that during the winter of 1860 and 1861 that body took

no action whatever looking towards preparation for the conquest of the outgoing States ; but it is equally true that it refused to take any steps in the direction of the acknowledgment of their independence.

To the secessionists, therefore, the outlook must have been decidedly warlike. They regarded as utterly futile the plans which were then being proposed in the North, having for their object to induce the Cotton States to re-enter the Union, according to which the North was to withdraw its claims to the control of the Territories, and abate somewhat of its objections to the spread of slavery. They judged correctly that none of these compromises would solve the difficulty ; that things had now come to such a pass that the independence of the Slave States, or of most of them, must be conceded, or there would be war. And the prospect that the North would quietly acknowledge that the Union had been dissolved seemed very doubtful.

There were, it is true, some indications which pointed that way. A few of the foremost men in the Republican Party, with Horace Greeley at their head, repudiated in advance the notion of compelling by force a State which had seceded to re-enter the Union. In the Democratic Party, too, most of the leaders, at the head of whom was Stephen A. Douglas, strongly deprecated an aggressive war against the seceding States, and even advocated the surrender of the Southern forts and the acceptance of what Douglas maintained was, as a matter of fact, the actual situation,—that is, the *de facto* independence of the States which had gone out of the Union.

But it was evident that the views of Mr. Greeley and his school in the Republican party were far from meeting with general acceptance, and it was also observed that Mr. Douglas and his followers carefully abstained from admitting the right of secession, and from putting their recommendations to evacuate the Southern forts on any other ground than that of present expediency. It was, in short, plain enough before Mr. Lincoln's accession to the Presidency that the action of the Cotton and Gulf States in leaving the Union had met with wellnigh universal disapproval throughout the North, irrespective of party lines, and that concessions of any sort were not to be expected.

President Lincoln, in his inaugural address, expressly confirmed the attitude of his predecessor as to the holding of the forts and the collection of the customs-duties. Not a syllable dropped from his lips looking to any toleration of the views of the secessionists. In fact it was not impossible to construe the distinct statement of his intention "to hold, occupy and possess the property and places belonging to the Government" so as to embrace an intention to recapture those of which the seceding States had taken possession. He emphatically insisted on the indivisibility of the Union, and on the view that the United States constituted but one nation. No encouragement for the recognition of the States which had seceded could be drawn from any utterance of his.

In this attitude the new President was unquestionably sustained by public opinion. While the

people did not demand from the Government that it should institute military operations for the purpose of repossessing itself of the forts which had been seized, they refused to entertain the idea of voluntarily surrendering any of the military posts still in the possession of the Government. They clung tenaciously to the view that the United States was a nation, and that its legitimate authority extended over the people of the States which had undertaken to leave the Union.

In anticipation, apparently, that this would be found to be the attitude of the United States authorities, most of the States which had seceded had, either just prior to their secession or shortly afterwards, taken possession of those forts and arsenals in their borders which were found without a garrison, and had occupied them with detachments of their militia. In this way the control over all the important forts in the Gulf of Mexico—with the exception of Fort Pickens, near Pensacola, and the forts at Key West and Tortugas—had been lost to the Government prior to Mr. Lincoln's accession, while on the Atlantic coast only Fort Sumter remained under the flag. The arsenals and their stores of arms met generally with the same fate.

To the people of the North this wholesale appropriation of the property of the Union was most exasperating. They were wholly unable to look at the matter from the point of view of the seceding States. They could see no justification whatever for their conduct; no aggression of any kind had

been as yet even threatened by the United States Government; no one was thinking of committing any hostile act against Texas or Louisiana or Alabama or South Carolina. Yet forts, which had cost millions of money, standing on ground which had been ceded to the United States, arsenals, containing hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of arms and munitions of war, were deliberately seized by these recently invented nations, or rather rebellious communities, as they were regarded in the North. The flag of the nation had been lowered, and its place taken by those of communities, some of which, at any rate, had not, fifty years before, even a nominal existence. The indignation of the people was perfectly natural; it was, moreover, strong and deep, and only awaited the proper moment to make itself heard and felt.

On the other hand, it must be said for the people of the seceding States, that, inasmuch as it looked as if they would ultimately have to fight for their independence,—seeing that not even those Northern statesmen who had the greatest sympathy with the South in the controversy were willing to allow to the Southern States the right to secede,—it was very desirable for them to get possession of the forts and arsenals before the struggle should commence. This, it was urged, was, under the circumstances, justifiable, even although the obligation to account for the value of the property seized should be fully recognized; for the matter was, in truth, one which directly affected the independence of the seceding States; in the event of war, the posses-

sion of the forts was obviously of great military importance; the pecuniary aspect of the question might, therefore, well be postponed to the political.

It is also quite possible that the fact that the claim of these States to recognition as independent nations had been so recently put forth made them particularly jealous of their honor and dignity. But, apart from this, it may well have seemed to their people intolerable that the other States should continue to hold forts and arsenals in the territory of States which had withdrawn from political association with them. The reasons sometimes alleged by the Federal authorities, such as that the object of the Government in continuing to hold the forts was the protection of the seceding States from foreign invasion,¹ were not, it must be confessed, very convincing. The people of the seceding States believed that the attitude of the United States Government was hostile to their independence, and in this belief they were unquestionably right. In fact, they must have gone farther than this. They must have considered that this hostility was a sufficient ground for declaring war; there is no other explanation of their conduct in seizing upon forts and dockyards over which the national flag was floating. For, however much allowance may be made for the excitement which prevailed at the time, such acts are unquestionably acts of war; it is foolish and futile to deny or to endeavor to attenuate their character as such. But in truth, the important question before the authorities of the seceding States at this

¹ Secretary Holt to Mr. Hayne; 1 W. R., 168.

time was whether, in view of the almost certain refusal of the United States to acknowledge their independence, it was not wisest, on the whole, to seize all the posts and property of which they could get possession, or, at least, all which could be acquired without an actual contest,—in other words, whether it was not wisest to begin a war which was so likely, sooner or later, to be forced upon them.

It is, however, plain that this course not only put the seceding States technically in the wrong, but that it was in reality a substitution of force for those negotiations, which, under the circumstances, seemed fairly to be called for. The United States Government was no trespasser on the soil of the seceding States; the lands occupied by its scanty garrisons had been regularly ceded to it; it was lawfully in possession of them. The forcible occupation of any of these military posts was, therefore, an outrage on the power which held them, and an insult to the flag which covered them. No government could be expected to tolerate such a wholesale appropriation of its military posts,—no nation could be expected tamely to submit to see its flag lowered from its forts, arsenals, and dock-yards. The effect which this course must inevitably have on the public opinion of the North was wholly lost sight of; to speak the truth, it was contemptuously disregarded.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II.

1. At the risk of repetition we will again call the reader's attention to the fact that we have carefully limited this discussion to an explanation of the political positions taken by the parties to this great contest. We have not undertaken to examine into the justice of these positions, still less to go into the merits of the controversy regarding the institution of slavery. It would no doubt be interesting to investigate the facts of the American Revolution and of the period immediately subsequent to it, with the view of determining whether they do or do not disclose the birth of thirteen independent nations. It would be also interesting to examine the grounds on which a State whose domain was carved out of the Territories, like Indiana or Mississippi, for instance, could be supposed by any body to be endowed at any time with full national sovereignty. It would be, no doubt, well worth while to go through the history of the slavery-question, with the intention of ascertaining whether, on the theory of the sovereignty of the nation, the Slave States had a moral justification for rebellion, or whether, on the theory of State nationality, they were morally justified in taking a step so likely to bring on a bloody and doubtful war, as their leaving the Union. But

neither the plan of this book, nor the space at our disposal, allows of any investigation into these matters. We must content ourselves with showing the actual political positions of the parties at the time when the struggle began.

2. In considering the conduct of the parties, the reader must be careful always to bear in mind that they took precisely opposite views of their rights and duties. South Carolina, for instance, considered herself a nation; she thought she had a perfect political right to withdraw from the Union; she considered that she had sufficient cause to exercise that right, and take the chances of its being followed by war. She held that she had a legitimate claim to the forts within her borders, although she was willing to pay whatever might be found to be due from her on account of the forts or any other public property which she deemed it necessary or advisable to take. Every one of these assumptions was denied by the vast majority of the people of the States which adhered to the Union; the action of the authorities of South Carolina, therefore, appeared to them to be treasonable, and her people appeared to be prosecuting a wicked and causeless rebellion. It is a simple matter of fact that the one view was held by the people of the States which remained in the Union, and that the other view was held by the people of South Carolina.

It is not necessary to be continually referring to these opposite views. It is important, however, always to bear them in mind; and especially is it desirable to remember that these facts make it

impossible to judge of the conduct of one party from the standpoint of the other. We are not speaking now of making allowances for conduct; that is a thing we may do on proper occasions when we occupy substantially the position of the party we are criticising. But we are speaking of those cases, of which the civil war was one, where the positions occupied by the parties were so utterly opposed that all criticism of one from the standpoint of the other is illegitimate and valueless. If we really want to know what happened in the war, we must first ascertain the standpoints of the parties, and then occupy them successively.





CHAPTER III.

SOUTH CAROLINA ALONE.

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN, as we have seen, had, in his Message to Congress on December 3, 1860, announced his intention of holding and, if necessary, defending the forts in the Southern States. This announcement caused the immediate resignation¹ of the two members of his Cabinet from the Cotton States,—Mr. Cobb of Georgia and Mr. Thompson of Mississippi,—but Mr. Buchanan saw them withdraw without hesitation, for, on the point that it was the duty of the Executive to maintain the existing hold of the Government on the forts in the seceding States, his mind was perfectly clear.

A more difficult question was that of reinforcing the forts. As early as October 27th General Scott had submitted to the President his famous "Views," which contained a recommendation to reinforce all the forts in the Cotton and Gulf States. But the troops at the disposal of the Administration were not numerous; and to collect them and carry out the recommendations of the General-in-chief would not

¹ Buchanan, p. 110. Thompson, however, remained some weeks, attending to the business of the office, and did not leave till the 9th of January, 1861.



have been an easy task. This might, however, have been effected; but it was a very serious question whether this course would not have tended strongly to intensify the hostile feeling existing throughout the South. Would it not—it was suggested—be better to forbear such precautionary measures, and to take the chance that the necessity for defending the Southern forts would never arise? Was the country fully prepared to take the ground that secession and rebellion must be crushed by main force? Because, if the country was not prepared to go to this extent, the Government would have made a serious blunder. It would have taken a step which was certain to produce irritation at the South, and which might lead to revolutionary measures being adopted, of which the administration would be in popular estimation the unprovoked author, and which the Government, not having the support of the people, would be powerless to repress. For, however undefended the Southern forts actually were, and however inviting their undefended condition might render them to the disunionists in the Cotton and Gulf States, it was quite possible that, if the Government should reinforce them in anticipation of the secession of those States, the danger of those States seceding would actually be increased.

Mr. Buchanan carefully considered this question, and came to the conclusion that it would be unwise to reinforce the forts. His Secretary of State, General Cass, of Michigan, took the opposite view, and on being overruled, resigned about the middle of December.

Two of the three vacancies above-mentioned were filled at once,—Mr. Black of Pennsylvania taking Mr. Cass's place, and General Dix of New York Mr. Cobb's. Mr. Floyd of Virginia was Secretary of War; Mr. Toucey of Connecticut, Secretary of the Navy; Mr. Holt of Kentucky, Postmaster-General; and Mr. Stanton of Pennsylvania, afterwards Secretary of War under Mr. Lincoln, Attorney-General. With the exception of Mr. Floyd, all, including the President, were Union men, and patriotic men. But the questions with which they had to deal were exceedingly difficult, and would have taxed the sagacity of the ablest statesmen. Let us, as briefly as we can, recount the history of the forts in Charleston Harbor.

From the date of Mr. Lincoln's election to the Presidency, on November 6, 1860, the purpose of the people of the State of South Carolina to secede from the Union had been clearly manifested. At first there seemed to be danger that the forts in Charleston Harbor might be attacked and captured by an unorganized force or mob. There was naturally much political excitement among the people of the State, and especially among the population of the city of Charleston. The rupture of ties that had existed for upwards of eighty years could never have been effected if a strong feeling of animosity towards the Northern people had not existed. But the authorities of the State at once took the matter in hand, with the determination of preventing, if possible, any unauthorized action.

The attitude of the State, while yet in the Union,

on the subject of the control of the forts was defined immediately after the meeting of Congress in a memorandum¹ drawn up on December 9th by the members of the House from South Carolina for the information of Mr. Buchanan. These gentlemen had called on the President, and he had requested them to state their views in writing. This they did, although remarking that they could not undertake to say what the convention, which was to meet in about ten days to consider the question of secession, would see fit to do. In the paper which they handed to the President, they said: "We now express to you our strong convictions that neither the constituted authorities, nor any body of the people of the State of South Carolina, will either attack or molest the United States forts in the harbor of Charleston previously to the action of the convention, and we hope and believe not until an offer has been made, through an accredited representative, to negotiate for an amicable arrangement of all matters between the State and Federal Government, provided that no reinforcement shall be sent into those forts, and their relative military status shall remain as at present." This last expression was explained to mean that there should be no change in the occupation of the forts, such as transferring Major Anderson's command from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter.²

Here we observe a recognition on the part of the South Carolina representatives of the propriety of

¹ 1 W. R., 116, 126. Cf. Governor Gist's letter of November 29, 1860, to Trescot, Assistant Secretary of State; Crawford, 31.

² 1 W. R., 126.

the Government's continuing to hold the forts until the State should offer to enter into a negotiation. Until such an offer shall be made, the State of South Carolina, it is hoped and believed, will not attack the United States forts. But even this doubtful assurance of the conduct of the State is expressly made dependent on the Government not sending reinforcements to its garrisons, and also on its maintaining the existing mode of occupying the forts, that is, on its not transferring its troops from the indefensible Fort Moultrie to the inaccessible Fort Sumter.

The noticeable thing about this statement of the position of South Carolina is that the right of the State to the forts is so coolly and bluntly assumed, and is emphasized by a distinctly pronounced threat of violence. The President of the United States might reasonably have expected that if he was to be approached at all by the representatives of a State which was about to leave the Union, he would receive an emphatic disclaimer of all hostile intentions towards the other States, and a positive assurance that every effort would be made to effect an amicable adjustment of all matters affected by the secession of the State, and that in the *interim* no attacks upon or seizures of United States property were to be apprehended. Such a statement as this would have been no more than decent and customary, if the outgoing State was sincerely desirous of a peaceful solution of the question, and it would have left its authorities quite at liberty to insist on negotiations for an adjustment being begun, continued, and

pushed to a conclusion, and to have enforced their demands, if necessary, by threats of war. But the representatives of South Carolina did not venture positively to assure Mr. Buchanan that the authorities of their State might not, even while she remained in the Union, attack the United States forts in the harbor of Charleston; they limited themselves to the expression of their "strong convictions" that she would not commit this outrage. Even the continuance of the existing military situation, precarious as it was for the United States authorities, although expressly stated to be the condition of South Carolina keeping the peace,¹ was not held out as affording absolute assurance as to her conduct. Such a communication was on its face a menacing and insulting communication, and the President ought to have told the bearers of it that any attack made upon the forts in Charleston Harbor, before or after the secession of the State of South Carolina, and until the question of the necessity and propriety of withdrawing the United States garrisons from the forts had been at any rate submitted to the proper authorities of the United States, would be resisted without the least hesitation by all the force at his disposal. Such an answer he might well have made, even if he had himself believed in the right of secession; for the attitude of South Carolina toward the Government which he represented, as disclosed in this memorandum, was undeniably arrogant and hostile.

¹ "We again reiterated our solemn belief that any change in the then existing condition of things in Charleston Harbor would, in the excited state of feeling at home, inevitably precipitate a collision."—Statement of Messrs. Miles and Keitt; 1 W. R., 125, 126.

Mr. Buchanan, however, made no criticism on the memorandum in question save that he told the South Carolina representatives¹ that he did not like the word "provided," because it looked as if they were trying to bind him,² while they themselves had no authority to commit the convention. This construction they promptly disavowed.

The representatives from South Carolina subsequently claimed that, having thus expressed to Mr. Buchanan their "strong convictions" that their State would abstain from violence if the Government should refrain from reinforcing the forts and from transferring the garrison of Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter, they were bound in honor to use their influence to prevent the violent action of their State, and Mr. Buchanan was likewise bound in honor to refrain from reinforcing the forts and from occupying Fort Sumter. The force of this suggestion is certainly not apparent on its face; nor is the subject much elucidated by the statements of the parties. We shall examine the evidence in the Notes to this chapter; suffice it to say here that it does not seem to us that the President was in any way committed to the retention of Major Anderson at Fort Moultrie. He was, as it seems to us, merely notified that, if Anderson and his command were reinforced or transferred to Fort Sumter, it was, in the opinion of the representatives from South Carolina, altogether probable that the forts would be attacked. But he

¹ Statement of Messrs. Miles and Keitt; 1 W. R., 126; Buchanan, p. 168.

² Mr. Buchanan says that he informed the delegation that he never would make an agreement not to reinforce the forts; Buchanan, p. 168.

was expressly told that no positive assurance could be given to him that the State might not attack the forts in any event. As it seems to us, he was simply put upon his guard, and left absolutely free to act as he might deem best.

But we need not stop to dwell longer on this phase of the negotiations. On December 20th, South Carolina seceded from the Union. On the 22d, three commissioners, Messrs. Barnwell, Adams, and Orr, were elected by the convention which passed the ordinance of secession "forthwith to proceed to Washington, authorized and empowered to treat with the Government of the United States for the delivery of the forts, magazines, light-houses, and other real estate, with their appurtenances, within the limits of South Carolina; and also for an apportionment of the public debt, and for a division of all other property held by the Government of the United States as agent of the Confederate States, of which South Carolina was recently a member; and, generally, to negotiate as to all other measures and arrangements proper to be made and adopted in the existing relations of the parties, and for the continuance of peace and amity between" South Carolina "and the Government at Washington."

What would have been the reception which these commissioners would have met with at Washington had nothing occurred to alter the situation in Charleston Harbor, we can only guess. No doubt President Buchanan would have declined to treat with them; he would unquestionably have alleged his want of authority so to do; but he would in

all probability have made their communication to him the subject of a special message to Congress. Be this, however, as it may, the commissioners, immediately after their arrival in Washington, were confronted on the morning of December 27th by a despatch from Charleston announcing that Major Anderson had transferred his command from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter.

Anderson, with two small companies, in all about 100 officers and men,¹ had been stationed at Fort Moultrie, on the north side of the harbor of Charleston. As for the other two forts,—Castle Pinckney, a small work, near the city, and Fort Sumter, which had been erected on a ledge in the middle of the harbor, but was not then completed, at least as regarded its internal arrangements,—neither of them was garrisoned.² A captain of engineers, Foster,³ was engaged in putting the latter post in order to receive its armament and garrison whenever it should be determined to make it ready for occupancy. Fort Moultrie was not capable of making a strong defence if attacked on the land side; it had not been built with any such purpose, and it was moreover commanded by sand hills at a distance of only 160 yards.⁴ Fort Sumter, on the other hand, was in the midst of the sea, more than a mile from Fort Moultrie, and two-thirds of a mile from Cumming's

¹ Crawford, 64.

² In a letter to the Adjutant-General,—1, W. R., 74, 75,—dated November 23d, Major Anderson strongly advised the Government to garrison both of these forts.

³ Afterwards Major-General John G. Foster.

⁴ 1 W. R., 88.

Point. Its exterior walls were complete, and with a proper armament and garrison it was a strong work.

Early in December an officer, Major Buell,¹ was sent from Washington with verbal instructions for Major Anderson. These were afterwards reduced to writing.² "You are carefully to avoid" (so ran these instructions) "every act which would needlessly tend to provoke aggression; and, for that reason, you are not, without evident and imminent necessity, to take up any position which could be construed into the assumption of a hostile attitude. But you are to hold possession of the forts in this harbor, and, if attacked, you are to defend yourself to the last extremity."³ The smallness of your force will not permit you, perhaps, to occupy more than one of the three forts, but an attack on or attempt to take possession of any one of them will be regarded as an act of hostility, and you may then put your command into either of them which you may deem most proper to increase its power of resistance. You are also authorized to take similar steps whenever you have tangible evidence of a design to proceed to a hostile act."

This evidence—"of a design to proceed to a hostile act"—Major Anderson thought he had discovered.⁴ It is not necessary that we should examine

¹ Afterwards Major-General D. C. Buell.

² I W. R., 89, 103, 117.

³ This was afterwards modified in a letter from Secretary Floyd to Major Anderson,—I W. R., 103,—and Anderson was informed that it was "neither expected nor desired that" he "should expose" his "own life or that of" his "men in a hopeless conflict in defence of these forts."

⁴ "Many things convinced me that the authorities of the State designed to proceed to a hostile act. Under this impression I could not hesitate

the grounds for his belief, for no one ever questioned his sincerity or truthfulness.¹ There can be no doubt that he thought either that he was to be attacked at Fort Moultrie or that Fort Sumter was to be occupied; and, accordingly, on the evening of December 26th, he transferred his command, by the exercise of great address and skill, to Fort Sumter.

It has never been questioned that Anderson acted entirely within his orders, nor has it ever been doubted that he fully believed that the emergency had arisen which made it his duty to transfer his command to Fort Sumter. But it is certain that the authorities of the State of South Carolina were not at that time contemplating the seizure of either Fort Sumter or Castle Pinckney, still less an attack on Fort Moultrie. On the contrary, at the very moment when Anderson was removing his little garrison from the latter post, the South Carolina commissioners had arrived in Washington to treat with the United States Government for the delivery of the forts and all the other public property in the State; and the news that the authorities of their State had, as soon as they had left Charleston, occupied Fort Sumter would have put a speedy and unexpected end to their mission.¹ There was, we may be sure, no intention whatever on the part of Governor Pickens to attempt to gain pos-

that it was my solemn duty to move my command from a fort which we could not probably have held longer than forty-eight or sixty hours, to this one, where my power of resistance is increased to a very great degree." Anderson to Cooper, 27 Dec., 1860; 1 W. R., 3. See, also, same to same, 105 and 120; also Foster to De Russy, 109.

¹ "Major Anderson . . . performed his part like the true soldier and man of the finest sense of honor that he was." Jefferson Davis, in *Rise and Fall*, vol. I., p. 216.

session of the forts by force while the commissioners sent by the State convention were at Washington.

The commissioners, having been told by the South Carolina representatives that President Buchanan had agreed that the military situation in Charleston Harbor should not be changed so long as no attack was made on the forts, were, not unnaturally, very much excited at the news of Anderson's secret and successful occupation of Fort Sumter. They went at once to the Secretary of War, and Mr. Floyd assured them that Major Anderson had violated the understanding given to the South Carolina representatives by the President. They then, on December 28th, attacked the President,¹ and charged that the faith of the Government had been forfeited by Anderson's conduct. We have not the President's account of the interview; but we have his denial² that any agreement between him and the representatives from South Carolina was ever made. The meeting was a stormy and painful one; the commissioners insisted that the President should explain and apologize for Anderson's conduct, and should furthermore order the evacuation of Charleston Harbor by the United States troops.³

On the next day, the 29th, they sent to the President their credentials, accompanying them with a very violent and peremptory letter, urging the immediate withdrawal of the troops. To this the President replied on the 31st in a long and well argued letter, very moderate in tone, in which he gave his account

¹ Orr to Crawford; Crawford, p. 148.

² Buchanan, pp. 168, 185.

³ Buchanan, p. 182.

of his relations with the South Carolina representatives, and dwelt with emphasis on the fact, which had just reached Washington, of the occupation of Fort Moultrie and Castle Pinckney by South Carolina troops, and of the seizure of the arsenal and all its contents. The commissioners replied in an exceedingly intemperate rejoinder, which the President declined to receive, and they thereupon at once returned to Charleston.

Considered as diplomatists, it cannot be said that the South Carolina commissioners achieved any distinction in their newly adopted profession by their performance of the task entrusted to them. They allowed their temper completely to run away with them; they chose to indulge in the luxury of crimination and recrimination. Any men in the least accustomed to the ways of the world, as these three gentlemen undoubtedly were, would have known, had they not been so excited and enraged, that the demands which they made on the President to order Anderson back to Fort Moultrie, and, afterwards, to withdraw the United States troops from Charleston Harbor, were utterly inadmissible. Such demands are never made among civilized nations unless by a very strong nation upon a very weak one, or upon one in some great strait, or unless it is expected that they will be refused, and thus furnish a basis for a declaration of war. Had Mr. Buchanan yielded to these demands, especially when it became known in what intemperate and peremptory language they were couched, he would have stood in great danger of being impeached.

Besides, there was really no reason in the world why the commissioners should not have accepted the President's explanations, and gone on with their negotiations. They might have succeeded in getting their claims presented in a special message and laid before Congress. Had they been really in earnest to push all peaceful means as far as they could before resorting to hostilities, this is what they would have done; for it was evident to every one that neither the President nor his Cabinet had ordered or even expected the movement of Major Anderson to Fort Sumter. They were as much surprised as the South Carolina commissioners, and therefore they were presumably quite as much disposed to listen to the commissioners as if Anderson had remained at Fort Moultrie. There was nothing, we repeat, in what Anderson had done to interfere with beginning the negotiations; but the commissioners preferred indulging their temper to proceeding to business; and so, when they had "freed their minds," they went home.

We have seen that the President in his reply to the commissioners from South Carolina referred to the news which had just reached him, that the authorities of that State had seized Castle Pinckney, a small and unimportant work near the city, and Fort Moultrie, which Anderson had just abandoned. This was done by order of Governor Pickens, as soon as the fact of Anderson's removal to Fort Sumter had become known. Pickens then proceeded to take the necessary measures to repair the damage which Anderson had done to Fort Moultrie when

he evacuated it, and to put it in condition to be used against Fort Sumter, should it become necessary. He also ordered the immediate construction of batteries on Cumming's Point and Morris Island bearing on Sumter, and commanding the approaches to Sumter, so as to prevent reinforcements being thrown into the fort by the United States Government. He also seized the arsenal in Charleston with all its contents.

These steps were most certainly acts of war ; and they were the first acts of war in Charleston Harbor. For, although the secessionists of South Carolina claimed that Major Anderson had begun the war by transferring his command from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter contrary to the understanding with the President, and also by dismantling Fort Moultrie, yet, considering that Anderson was lawfully in possession of all the forts, and believed that the State authorities were about "to proceed to a hostile act," his action in the premises cannot properly be held to be a beginning of hostilities. It was rather the act of a prudent officer who, recognizing the danger of his situation, undertakes only to render it more secure. But the forcible seizure of Castle Pinckney and Fort Moultrie and the erection of hostile batteries on the south shore of the harbor by the authorities of South Carolina were undeniably hostile acts, and, in fact, were so regarded at the time by every one.

We may perhaps pause a moment here, to remark that the peculiar methods pursued by South Carolina in her efforts to get possession by peaceful

means of the forts and arsenal in her borders rendered success wellnigh hopeless from the start. Not only were the members of Congress from the State who called upon Mr. Buchanan unable to give him any positive assurance that the State would keep the peace, pending efforts for a peaceful solution of the serious questions which the secession of the State was sure to raise, but they took pains to warn him that the authorities of the State would certainly proceed to hostilities unless the United States Government consented to allow its forts and garrison to remain in their existing indefensible situation. They pointed out the precarious condition of the forts; they made no secret of the intention of the State ultimately to get possession of them; and then they endeavored to induce the President to consent to an indefinite continuance of this unsafe state of things, under a threat of immediate violence should he make any attempt to improve the situation. Such diplomacy reminds one of the fable of the wolf and the lamb; its failure might have been predicted in advance. Its every utterance was menacing and hostile; the Government of South Carolina might as well have seized the undefended forts and arsenal in the first instance, and then sent its commissioners to Washington to treat for Fort Moultrie. It was certainly to the credit of South Carolina that she did not do this; but she ought, if she tried peaceful methods at all, to have given them a fair trial. This, in the existing temper of the people and the officials, was perhaps hardly practicable; but then a sagacious statesman might, one would

suppose, have foreseen this from the beginning, and, on this ground, have advised the immediate seizure of the undefended posts and arsenals.

Returning now to our narrative, Mr. Buchanan, being advised by Major Anderson of the hostile preparations of the South Carolinians, determined to reinforce Fort Sumter at once. We have not the space, nor is it needful, to go into the details of the projects which were considered; suffice it to say that the Government finally chartered an unarmed steamer, the *Star of the West*, which, on the 9th of January, 1861, entered the harbor of Charleston, but was compelled by the enemy's fire from a battery on Morris Island, to retire without having reached Fort Sumter. She was struck twice, but no one was injured. Major Anderson, not having received official notice of this expedition for his relief, and willing to believe that the attack on the steamer had not been authorized by the Governor of the State, wrote a peremptory note to Pickens,¹ telling him that only on the hope that the firing on the *Star of the West* had not received his sanction or authority, did he refrain from opening fire upon his batteries, and notifying him that unless the act were promptly disclaimed, he should treat it as an act of war, and should henceforth not permit any vessels to pass within range of the guns of his fort. To this note he received the same day a reply,² couched in courteous but very explicit terms, in which the whole responsibility for the firing at the *Star of the West* was unhesitatingly assumed by the Governor. In it

¹ I W. R., 134.

² *Ibid.* 135.



the position of South Carolina as an independent nation is unequivocally stated, and the retention of Fort Sumter by the United States authorities is claimed to be "an act of positive hostility." The Governor is under no illusions. He states correctly the purpose of the United States in holding the fort,—it is "the coercion of the State by the armed force of the Government. . . . It is not perceived," he closes by saying, "how . . . the conduct which you propose to adopt can be reconciled with any other purpose of your Government than that of imposing upon this State the condition of a conquered province."

And Governor Pickens was unquestionably right. South Carolina was claiming to be an independent nation, and, unwilling as people might be to use the word, there was nothing for the United States to do, if her claim was to be denied, but to conquer her. The word has a harsh sound, undoubtedly; the Northern public at the time preferred to speak of restoring the State to the Union; but South Carolina knew what she wanted perfectly well, and was prepared to fight for her independence to the bitter end. There was nothing else to do but to try to conquer her, and conquered she finally was.

Whether this letter of Governor Pickens was or was not what Anderson had expected, it at any rate exposed the situation of the parties so clearly, that the Major thought he had better defer executing his threat of closing the harbor until he had definite orders to that effect from his Government. In fact, such a step as this, taken in retaliation for even an

act so hostile as that of firing at the *Star of the West*, was plainly beyond the instructions which he had received from Major Buell, which limited Anderson's military operations to those required for the defence of his command. To avoid embarrassment, therefore, he informed Pickens¹ that he intended sending an officer to Washington to obtain further instructions. The Governor willingly assented; and on the same evening Lieutenant Talbot left for Washington.

Governor Pickens may have thought that he could perceive in this step of Major Anderson signs of weakening. At any rate, on the 11th of January, he sent a deputation to him under a flag of truce, "to present considerations of the gravest public character . . . to induce the delivery of Fort Sumter to the constituted authorities of the State of South Carolina, with a pledge on its part to account for" the "public property under" his (Anderson's) "charge." The two gentlemen who acted as ambassadors, Judge Magrath and General Jamison, seem to have exerted all their eloquence, but the Major felt that his duty as a military man was perfectly clear, as indeed it was, and he returned an unqualified negative to their request. At the same time, feeling, perhaps, that the events of the last two days had opened a new chapter in the history of the question, he proposed² that he should send another officer, to accompany an envoy to be named by the Governor, to proceed to Washington and refer this demand for the surrender of the fort to the Presi-

¹ Crawford, p. 190.

² *Ib.*, p. 194.

dent. To this Pickens gladly assented, and selected Mr. Hayne, the Attorney-General of the State,—Anderson detailing Lieutenant Hall as his representative. These gentlemen arrived in Washington on the 13th of January.

Mr. Buchanan did not welcome this joint embassy from Charleston and Fort Sumter. He could see no necessity for it at all. Anderson's orders to defend the fort were positive and explicit. The President did not see why he should be again called upon to announce the already declared purpose of the administration to maintain and defend the post. A peremptory refusal on his part to yield to this new demand might furnish an excuse for a resort to arms on the part of the secessionists. There were many reasons why they would prefer to get possession of Fort Sumter before the administration of Mr. Lincoln should come into power, and Mr. Buchanan was naturally very solicitous not to furnish them with any pretext for an attack on the fort during the remainder of his term of office, such as might be afforded by the formal rejection of a demand for the surrender of the post made by an envoy specially empowered to make such a demand. Major Anderson, in fact, by sending this proposition to Washington, had added another cause of embarrassment to those which already existed. But there was nothing for the Government to do but to wait until Mr. Hayne should present his demand and then to refuse it.

Meantime, Fort Sumter was to be held, but not reinforced, unless Major Anderson should deem it

necessary or advisable to ask for reinforcements. This was the policy decided on, although there are indications of a more pronounced course of action having been considered by one member, at least, of Mr. Buchanan's Cabinet.¹ But, as a whole, the President and his advisers could not bring themselves to accept the view of the situation so clearly expressed by Governor Pickens and so painfully felt by Major Anderson. They were still hoping that civil war would somehow be avoided, or at least that they would get through their term of office before any passage at arms should take place. They were determined, it is true, that no military post should be surrendered, but they were very much in hopes that none would be attacked. And since they had despatched the *Star of the West*, a letter from Anderson had been received, announcing that he could hold the fort against any force which could be brought against him. He had provisions sufficient to last him beyond the 4th of March, when Mr. Lincoln's administration would succeed that of Mr. Buchanan. It was not likely, so Mr. Buchanan thought, that the South Carolinians would attack Fort Sumter unless some attempt should be made to reinforce or supply it, and he did not see that at present it needed supplies or reinforcements. Hence Holt, who had succeeded Floyd as Secretary of War, not only approved fully of what he termed Anderson's "forbearance" in not replying to the battery which fired on the *Star of the West*, but told him that, as the

¹ See Mr. Black's letter to General Scott, Jan. 16 (1 W. R., 140), and to the President, Jan. 22d ; Crawford, 241.

apprehensions of the Government for his safety had been relieved, it was not the intention at present to send him reinforcements. "The attempt to do so would, no doubt," Mr. Holt wrote, "be attended by a collision of arms and the effusion of blood—a national calamity which the President is most anxious, if possible, to avoid."¹ But he did not fail to add that, should he need help, he should receive it. "Whenever, in your judgment, additional supplies or reinforcements are necessary for your safety, or for a successful defence of the fort, you will at once communicate the fact to this Department, and a prompt and vigorous effort will be made to forward them."

Anderson was, however, expressly forbidden to interfere with the erection and progress of the works which were being built by the South Carolinians for use against his fort, and to command the approaches to it. In February, he asked for instructions in case he should find the floating battery (which had recently been constructed) approaching the fort. He was told that in this matter, as in all others, he was to follow his orders, which were "to act strictly on the defensive, and to avoid, by all means compatible with the safety of" his "command, a collision with the hostile forces by which" he was "surrounded. If," writes the Secretary of War, "you have reason to believe that it [the floating battery] is approaching merely to take up a position at a good distance, should the pending question be not amicably settled, then, unless your safety is so clearly en-

¹ 1 W. R., 140; Holt to Anderson, Jan. 16, 1861.

dangered as to render resistance an act of necessary self-defence and protection, you will act with that forbearance which has distinguished you heretofore in permitting the South Carolinians to strengthen Fort Moultrie and erect new batteries for the defence of the harbor.”¹

In these instructions the administration of Mr. Buchanan was certainly carrying the policy of non-interference to its extreme limit. The Government was, however, still in hopes that some amicable settlement might be arrived at.² The Peace Conference, called at the instance of Virginia, was endeavoring to present a basis for the reorganization of the Union. The President was very unwilling to believe that a civil war was inevitable. Hence he issued these orders to Anderson, and imposed upon him the difficult task of sustaining patiently the trials incident to such an anomalous situation as that in which he was placed.

Anderson, therefore, was left in Fort Sumter, with a manifestly inadequate force, his only means of communication with his Government at the mercy of his enemies, forbidden to interfere with the erection of the formidable batteries around him which were being built and supplied for the purpose of forcing him to lower his flag and surrender his post, and was expected quietly to wait until the preparations for the attack should be so far completed as to justify him in demanding supplies and reinforcements as “necessary for” his “safety, or for a suc-

¹ 1 W. R., 182.

² See 1 W. R., 183; Holt to Anderson.

cessful defence of the fort,"—to use the language of the Secretary of War,—or until the Government, in anticipation of such a crisis, should order him to evacuate the post. No doubt he felt acutely the difficulties of his situation. The demands upon his vigilance were unceasing. His patience was sometimes tried by the conduct of the South Carolinians. His judgment was called upon to act on questions of an unfamiliar and often perplexing nature. His most cherished feelings as an officer of the army were continually exposed to insult and outrage. "The truth is," he wrote later to the Adjutant-General,¹ "that the sooner we are out of this harbor the better. Our flag runs an hourly risk of being insulted, and my hands are tied by my orders, and, if that was not the case, I have not the power to protect it. God grant that neither I nor any other officer of our army may be again placed in a position of such mortification and humiliation."

Anderson, however, was himself in part responsible for remaining in this anomalous and painful situation. There were, as he well knew, two ways, and only two ways, out of it; and to one of these he was most averse. He knew by the end of January that the net was fast closing around him and his command; that if any relief was ever to reach them, it must be sent at once. But he knew also that the sending of any relief would be opposed by all the force which the State of South Carolina could mus-

¹ Anderson to Thomas, 6 April, 1861; 1 W. R., 245. At this time, it is true, the situation had become worse for Anderson, but the main features of it had existed unchanged for three months. See also Anderson to Thomas, 4 April, 1861; 1 W. R., 237.

ter. He saw that there must be in such an event a serious, bloody, and doubtful contest; and he believed, and rightly too, that such a contest would inaugurate a civil war. Hence he did not ask for reinforcements or supplies.¹ He himself did not believe that a war was necessary, or even advisable on any ground, nor did he think that it would succeed in restoring the Union.² He undoubtedly expected that the Government would ultimately view the matter in this light, and would withdraw his command from Fort Sumter. If it required him to remain, he was prepared to do his duty and to defend his post. But he considered it unjustifiable to incur a conflict of arms in the attempt to hold on to Fort Sumter.³ Hence he refrained from asking

¹ 1 W. R., 159; Anderson to Cooper, Jan. 30, 1861. *Id.*, 163; same to same, Feb. 5, 1861.

² 1 W. R., 294; Anderson to Thomas, April 8, 1861. Same to same, same date.

³ That Anderson did not ask for reinforcements because he was unwilling to incur the responsibility of taking a step which would be followed immediately by active hostilities on the part of South Carolina, and that he thought up to the very last that he had in this way prevented the beginning of the civil war, is stated by him in a letter to a lady, written just before the attack on the fort in April, 1861:

"Had I demanded reinforcements while Mr. Holt was in the War Department, I know that he would have despatched them at all hazards. I did not ask them, because I knew that, the moment it should be known here that additional troops were coming, they would assault me, and thus inaugurate civil war. My policy, feeling—thanks be to God!—secure for the present in my stronghold, was to keep still, to preserve peace, to give time for the quieting of the excitement, which was at one time very high throughout this region, in the hope of avoiding bloodshed. There is now a prospect that this hope will be realized, that the separation, which has been inevitable for months, will be consummated without the shedding of one drop of blood. . . . A hope may be indulged, that our errant sisters, thus leaving us as friends, may at some future time be won back by conciliation and justice."—Crawford, 290, 291.

for reinforcements; and President Buchanan and his Secretary of War, Mr. Holt, who, notwithstanding their unwillingness to do anything which would bring on a collision, were yet prepared to fulfil their promise to Anderson and send him succor when he should demand it, were amazed¹ to find at the close of the month of February that the task of reinforcing Fort Sumter was probably beyond the resources then at the disposal of the Government.

In fact, early in February, an expedition for the reinforcement of Fort Sumter had been prepared, and would, no doubt, have been despatched at any time, if Anderson had asked for aid. The force, however, which was to have gone, while very possibly sufficient for the purpose had it been sent in January, would have been far too weak to have effected its object in the middle or latter part of February, when the enemy's batteries had received their proper armament. It is true, enough had been said by Major Anderson in his numerous letters to the Adjutant-General and by Captain Foster in his letters to the Chief of Engineers to acquaint the Government with all the material facts of the situation; but as there was no desire on the part of the War Department to despatch the expeditionary force, and as there was great unwillingness on the part of Major Anderson to ask for it, believing, as he did, that civil war would result from the attempt to send him reinforcements, it is not strange that the time should have slipped away, and that the gravity of the situation

¹ Crawford, 284.

should not have been recognized by the Government until it was too late for effective action to be taken.

Returning now from this account of the policy of the administration of Mr. Buchanan in regard to Fort Sumter, we observe that with the mission of Colonel Hayne to Washington, as the special envoy of the State of South Carolina, terminates the story of the separate action of the State of South Carolina. Hayne, as we shall see, was, on his arrival in Washington, induced by representations made to him by the senators from the other Cotton and Gulf States materially to modify his plan of operations; and from this time on, the action of South Carolina was practically determined in accordance with the views of the other seceding States. All this will be more appropriately considered in the next chapter, where we shall have occasion to speak of the formation and policy of the new Confederacy.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III.

1. The agreement or understanding with President Buchanan which the South Carolina representatives claim was arrived at on December 9, 1860, is thus stated in their own words :¹

“ Suffice it to say, that, considering the President as bound in honor, if not by treaty-stipulations, not to make any change in the forts or to send reinforcements to them unless they were attacked, we of the delegation who were elected to the convention felt equally bound in honor to do everything on our part to prevent any premature collision.”

That intelligent persons should have believed it possible that any sane man in Mr. Buchanan's place should have entered into such an understanding as this, is extraordinary indeed. To begin with, how could an agreement that there should be no change in the mode of holding the forts “ unless they were attacked,” apply to Fort Sumter, which was absolutely defenceless, and could be taken at any moment? It was perhaps possible for Fort Moultrie to hold out long enough after the news of its being attacked had reached Washington to allow of reinforcements being sent to its garrison; but this was confessedly out of the question as regarded Fort.

¹ I W. R., 127.

Sumter, which was by far the most important work. Nothing but the extraordinary excitement under which the South Carolina politicians were laboring, can account for the fact that Messrs. Miles and Keitt were able to set down in writing their belief that Mr. Buchanan ever agreed to be put in such a ridiculous position.

But Messrs. Miles and Keitt have told us in the same paper that Mr. Buchanan "did not like the word 'provided'" in the paper which they handed him,¹ "because (he said) it looked as if we were binding him, while avowing that we had no authority to commit the convention. We told him that we did not so understand it. We were expressing our convictions and belief, predicated upon the maintenance of a certain condition of things, which maintenance was absolutely and entirely in his power. If he maintained such condition, then we believed that collision would be avoided until the attempt at a peaceable negotiation had failed. If he did not, then we solemnly assured him that we believed that collision must inevitably and at once be precipitated. He seemed satisfied, and said it was not his intention to send reinforcements or make any change."²

So far, certainly, there is nothing to show any agreement of any kind between the representatives from South Carolina and the President. On the contrary, by the showing of the representatives themselves, the President had objected to the proviso with

¹ "Provided that no reinforcements shall be sent into those forts, and their relative military status shall remain as at present."—1 W. R., 126.

² 1 W. R., 126.

which their written memorandum closed, which was equivalent to saying that he proposed to remain at liberty to reinforce the forts, and to change their "relative military status,"—that is, to transfer Anderson from Moultrie to Sumter,—whenever he might deem it advisable to do so, although he did not at that moment have any intention of taking such action.

At the close of the interview, however, the President, according to the narrative of the representatives, "said in substance: 'After all, this is a matter of honor among gentlemen. I do not know that any paper or writing is necessary. We understand each other.' One of the delegation, just before leaving the room, remarked; 'Mr. President, you have determined to let things remain as they are, and not to send reinforcements; but suppose that you were hereafter to change your policy for any reason, what then? That would put us who are willing to use our personal influence to prevent any attack upon the forts before commissioners are sent on to Washington in rather an embarrassing position.' 'Then,' said the President, 'I would first return you this paper.'"¹

This is stated by the representatives to be "a full and exact account of what passed between the President and the delegation." There is no reason to doubt it; and certainly there is no evidence to be found in this account of any agreement on either side until we come to the promise of the President to return them the paper which they had given him, in case he should "for any reason change his policy." Why the paper should be returned in this event is

¹ 1 W. R., 126. See *ante*, p. 32, for a copy of the "paper."

not very apparent, but we suppose that what was meant was, that the delegation were to have notice that such a change of policy had been determined on. Nothing more, certainly, can be inferred.

It is, therefore, most surprising to find Messrs. Miles and Keitt of the delegation making the statement first quoted above, that the President had bound himself in honor not to reinforce the forts or change their relative military status, unless they were attacked. For, whatever the President might have meant by what he said about the matter being "a matter of honor among gentlemen," he certainly was not at the time understood to mean that he was binding himself to adhere indefinitely to his then existing intention not to send reinforcements to the forts or make any change in their military situation; the remark about the possibility of a *change of policy* on the part of the President, made by one of the delegation just after the President had spoken about the matter being "a matter of honor," settles this point. The choice of the word "policy" is conclusive. If the delegation had at that time thought that the President had become bound "in honor" not to change the existing situation, they would assuredly have corrected the speaker.

What President Buchanan meant by his remark about the matter being "a matter of honor among gentlemen," is made plain by his adding: "I do not know that any paper or writing is necessary. We understand each other." That is, these gentlemen had explained their views fully in conversation; he relied on their having told him the exact truth in

regard to the political situation; and therefore he did not care to keep the paper which at first he had been careful to obtain; he was satisfied with their verbal statements. That was all he meant, or could have meant. In fact, he was particular to tell them that his taking the paper from them must not be understood as binding him not to reinforce the forts, and they said they did not understand that it did so bind him.

Had Mr. Buchanan changed his policy he would no doubt have returned the paper to these gentlemen, or some of them, or have otherwise informed them of his change of policy. But the act of Major Anderson was not the result of any change of policy on the part of the President, as has been above sufficiently shown.

2. Major Anderson arrived in Charleston Harbor about November 20th, and on the 23d he strongly urged on the Government to garrison Fort Sumter and Castle Pinckney.¹ His own opinion was that such a measure would deter the South Carolinians from attempting to take the forts by violence. But the Government feared that to add to Anderson's force might increase the prevailing excitement, and "lead to serious results."² For the same reason, doubtless, the Government refrained from ordering him to occupy Fort Sumter, a much more tenable post than Fort Moultrie.

The administration were right, as it turned out, in supposing that so long as no change was made in the

¹ Anderson to Cooper; 1 W. R., 74, 78.

² Cooper to Anderson; 1 W. R., 82.

situation, the South Carolinians would not attack the forts. But they ran the risk of being mistaken ; and it is certain that if South Carolina had seized Fort Sumter when it was unoccupied, Anderson could not have remained in Fort Moultrie many days. The harbor would have been in the undisputed control of the State long before Mr. Buchanan's term of office expired. It is also not unlikely that this result might have been effected without a collision, as Anderson's situation at Fort Moultrie would have been so extremely precarious that the Government might very possibly have felt compelled to withdraw him. On the other hand, if the Government had acceded to Anderson's request and had adequately manned the forts, it was certainly quite possible that Anderson would have proved to be right, and that South Carolina would not have hazarded a resort to arms, the issue of which would have been so very doubtful.

3. It is certainly an interesting fact that Anderson's transfer of his command to Fort Sumter should have been made under a misconception of the situation. He was trying his best strictly to obey his orders. He thought he had found that "tangible evidence of a design to proceed to a hostile act," which in Major Buell's language, justified him in occupying Sumter. But there can be no doubt that he was mistaken. The authorities of South Carolina had sent their ambassadors to Washington to treat for the forts, and although they were determined to secure the forts ultimately, they had no intention of attacking them while the negotiations were going on. Anderson, we repeat, was mistaken. But it was a

fortunate thing for his Government that he was mistaken. There can be little doubt that Sumter would have been seized as soon as the commissioners had learned that the forts would not be surrendered. It would also have been perfectly possible to have forestalled Anderson in occupying Sumter. Anderson's course, therefore, secured the control of the General Government over this conspicuous military post until Mr. Lincoln's administration came into power; and then the new Confederacy took the great responsibility of making that attack upon it which so aroused the North.

4. If Major Anderson's letter, quoted in the note to page 53, is to be taken literally, it certainly lays him open to severe censure. It is no part of the duty of a military man to have a policy, unless, of course, he is placed by his superiors in a position where he is expected to exercise the functions of government. Such was not the position of Major Anderson. He was simply holding an important military post. Of the effect on the country of an attack on that post, or of an attempt to furnish it with reinforcements or supplies, it was clearly for the Government to judge, and not for him. He was ordered to notify the Government whenever in his judgment additional supplies or reinforcements were "necessary for" his "safety or for a successful defence of" the "fort."¹ His language in the letter above referred to would bear the construction that he deliberately disobeyed this order; that he refrained from asking for supplies and reinforcements, not because he did not think them

¹ Holt to Anderson, 1 W. R., 140.

necessary, but because, to use his own words, "I knew that the moment it should be known here that additional troops were coming, they would assault me, and thus inaugurate civil war." It is hardly necessary to say that his knowledge, or belief rather, that an attack on him, which would be the beginning of a civil war, would follow the sending to him of supplies and reinforcements, furnishes not the slightest justification for disobedience of orders. For all that he could tell, the Government might, for reasons of State policy, be desirous that the civil war, which was apparently inevitable, should begin at Fort Sumter. At any rate that was no affair of his; his duty was to furnish the Government with the information required of him; if he needed supplies or reinforcements either "for his own safety or for a successful defence of the post," to say so, and leave the decision whether to send them or not with those in whose hands lay the power and therefore the responsibility of sending or withholding them. It needs hardly to be said that the duty of an officer of the army to obey his orders is not in the least affected by the fact that the emergency with which he is confronted is a civil war and not a foreign war. This is wholly immaterial. So long as he holds his commission, the Government has a right to his obedience and his best services.

Anderson, it must be remembered, however, and his engineer officer, Foster, sent very full and accurate reports to the War Office. It may be, therefore, that he deemed that he had substantially complied with the order of the Secretary of War by fully ex-

plaining in these reports the situation of his command and the progress made by the enemy in the construction of their batteries. It is certainly possible that he did so think, and that the letter to which reference has been made above does not give a just idea of his conceptions of his duty as an officer of the army.





CHAPTER IV.

THE NEW CONFEDERACY.

MEANWHILE the other Cotton States and the Gulf States were not idle. It was certain from the first that Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana would secede from the Union. Texas also was practically certain to follow in their train. These States, warned perhaps by the experience of South Carolina, secured without striking a blow all the forts in their borders with the exception of Fort Pickens in the harbor of Pensacola, and the forts, Taylor and Jefferson, at Key West and the Dry Tortugas. They passed their ordinances of secession in January, 1861, with the exception of Texas, which went out on February 1st, and on February 8th, in connection with South Carolina, they effected at Montgomery, Alabama, a regular organization of the Confederate States of America. The seven States adopted at first a Provisional Government, and, a month later, a constitution very similar to that of the United States. Jefferson Davis of Mississippi was elected President, and Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia, Vice-President of the new Confederacy. Both were able men of large experience in politics,

but the task of direction and initiative naturally fell to the former.

When Mr. Hayne, the new envoy from South Carolina, arrived in Washington, the secession of the six States above-mentioned was in progress, and their leading men in Washington were anxious to complete the formation of the new government before the issue between South Carolina and the Washington authorities should be too sharply drawn. They therefore induced Hayne to postpone delivering his credentials and his demand for the surrender of Fort Sumter until the close of the month of January. In their letter to him¹ they seem to entertain a hope of a peaceful settlement of all existing difficulties,² based on the public declarations of the President that he had no power to "coerce a State." But it is not probable that they looked forward beyond the unopposed establishment of the Southern Confederacy.

It is not necessary to go into the details of the correspondence between these Senators and Mr. Hayne,³ between them and the Secretary of War, and between Mr. Hayne and the President and Secretary. Mr. Hayne finally, on January 31st, presented his demand for the surrender of the fort.⁴ He put his case on the ground that South Carolina was an independent power, *de facto*, at any rate; that her secession to the United States Government of the land

¹ Crawford, p. 219.

² Cf. Davis's *Rise and Fall*, vol. I., p. 227.

³ For an able letter, reviewing the situation and the correspondence, by Judge Magrath, Secretary of State of South Carolina, see Crawford, p. 222 *et seq.*

⁴ Crawford, p. 226.

on which the fort stood was made when she was a member of the Confederacy of which that Government was the common agent, and that, she having now withdrawn from the association, the land must, by public law, revert to her. At the same time, she was willing to pay whatever might be found due from her. His letter was clear and forcible, and from his point of view, unanswerable. The Secretary of War, Mr. Holt, to whom Mr. Buchanan entrusted the correspondence, protested in his reply¹ against the charge of unfriendliness towards South Carolina; he even stated that the purpose of holding the fort was to protect the harbor against a foreign attack. But he utterly refused to give any consideration at all to the demand for the surrender of the post, and reiterated the right and intention of the Government to supply and reinforce the garrison whenever the administration might think it in need of either reinforcements or supplies.

It cannot be pretended that Mr. Holt's letters² were as frank, or as clear as to the purposes of the Government which he represented, as were those of Colonel Hayne in respect to the position of South Carolina. The Secretary probably did not care to speak with absolute frankness. Perhaps he was afraid that to do so would precipitate the explosion which he and the President were so anxious, if possible, to avoid, or at least to defer, until the next administration should come into power. We never

¹ 1 W. R., 166.

² Reference is here made also to his letter to Senators Fitzpatrick, Mallory, and Slidell; 1 W. R., 149.

find him distinctly saying that the attitude of the United States Government was one of hostility to the independence of South Carolina; and that Fort Sumter would therefore continue to be held for military reasons. On the contrary he dwelt on the "peaceful policy of the administration towards South Carolina." "The attitude of the garrison of Fort Sumter," he declared, was "neither menacing, nor defiant, nor unfriendly."¹ These professions, however, did not impose on Hayne. He saw that they were true only on the supposition that his State would relinquish her claim to be an independent nation. In his final rejoinder he said:² "It is in vain to ignore the fact South Carolina is, to yours, a foreign government, and how, with this patent fact before you, you can consider the continued occupation of a fort in her harbor a pacific measure and parcel of a pacific policy, passes certainly my comprehension."

Hayne left Washington on February 8th. His efforts had been fruitless, but it cannot be said that he was in any way to blame for this. He was sent to ask what the Government of the United States could not give.

Hayne telegraphed to Governor Pickens on the 6th that he had met with an outright refusal.³ The same day Governor Pickens; with the full approval of his Council, issued orders for making the necessary preparations to bombard Fort Sumter. But, on the

¹ Holt to Hayne; 1 W. R., 168.

² Hayne to Buchanan; Crawford, p. 233.

³ *Conf. Doc.*, p. 367.

12th, before the State could take separate action, a resolution passed the Confederate Congress giving to the Confederate Government charge of the questions between the several States and the United States Government. That this would involve delay was apparent at once to the Governor and Council, and a despatch was immediately sent to Mr. Cobb, the president of the convention at Montgomery, urging that it was due to South Carolina to get possession of Sumter at a period not beyond the 4th of March, on which day Mr. Lincoln's administration would come into power.

Governor Pickens wrote the next day (February 13th) to Mr. Cobb a very able letter¹ setting forth at length the importance to his State of obtaining possession of Fort Sumter, and stating that it was the intention of the State authorities to attack the fort as soon as their preparations should be completed. The writer dwelt upon the extreme importance of getting possession of the fort during the administration of Mr. Buchanan.

"If war can be averted," wrote he, "it will be by making the capture of Fort Sumter a fact accomplished during the continuance of the present administration, and leaving to the incoming administration the question of an open declaration of war. Such a declaration, separated, as it will be, from any present act of hostilities during Mr. Lincoln's administration, may become to him a matter requiring consideration. That consideration will not be expected of him, if the attack on the fort is made during his

¹ Pickens to Cobb; 1 W. R., 254.

administration, and becomes, therefore, as to him, an act of present hostility. Mr. Buchanan cannot resist, because he has not the power. Mr. Lincoln may not attack, because the cause of the quarrel will have been, or may be, considered by him as past."

No one can fail to note the sagacity shown by these observations. It would no doubt have been fortunate for the Southern Confederacy if its authorities had felt themselves in a position to follow Governor Pickens's counsel; for it is very improbable that Mr. Buchanan would have felt himself authorized to call the North to arms if Sumter had been attacked while he was President, and it is almost certain that Mr. Lincoln would never have taken the risk involved in beginning an aggressive war against the South in retaliation for any past act, no matter how flagrant.¹

In pursuance of the policy laid down in the Governor's letter, the arrangements for reducing the fort proceeded towards completion. A council of war was ordered for the 19th,² to consider the details for the attack. Whether it would have been possible at that time to capture the fort is, to say the least, very doubtful; the chances were decidedly against success.³ But the attempt was not made. The Confederate Congress had already passed—on the 15th

¹ See comments of Hon. Montgomery Blair in *Conf. Doc.*, p. 359.

² *Conf. Doc.*, p. 374.

³ On this point the opinion of Major John Johnson, late of the Engineer Corps, C. S. Army, and the author of the important work entitled *The Defence of Charleston Harbor*, is of the highest value. His opinion is—to use his own words in a letter to the author—"clear and positive" that it was not "possible for South Carolina to have taken Fort Sumter prior to the 4th of March, 1861."

—a resolution that the President should be authorized to make all the necessary military preparations for obtaining possession of Forts Sumter and Pickens; and, on the 20th, Mr. Davis wrote to the Governor,¹ saying that “as soon as possible” he would “send an engineer of military skill to examine and report on the condition of Charleston Harbor and its works of defence and offence,”—and adding that he was “prepared for the criticism which the rash often bestow upon unnecessary caution.” In another letter,² dated the 22d, he said he hoped that the Governor would be able “to prevent the issue of peace or war for the Confederate States from being decided by any other than the authorities constituted to conduct” their “international relations.”

Under these circumstances, the authorities of South Carolina reluctantly, and perhaps with the feeling that their friends and associates at Montgomery had not given to their views all the consideration they deserved,³ yielded the control of all military operations in Charleston Harbor to the Confederate authorities. On March 1st, Walker, the Secretary of War of the Confederate States, informed Governor Pickens⁴ that his Government had assumed the control of military operations at Charleston, and would “make demand of the fort when fully advised”; adding that an officer was going that night to take charge. The same day, President Davis wrote to the Governor⁵ to advise him of the selec-

¹ *Conf. Doc.*, p. 374.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 377, 378.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 379.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 375.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 379.

tion of General Beauregard for the position. That officer arrived at Charleston on March 3d.¹ On the next day Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated President of the United States. The opportunity, if there had been any, for taking Fort Sumter during Mr. Buchanan's administration, had passed away.

¹ I W. R., 25.





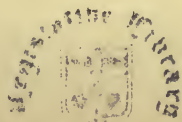
CHAPTER V.

THE ACCESSION OF MR. LINCOLN.

THE policy of the new President of the United States was distinctly declared in his Inaugural Address, and may be best stated in his own words:

“To the extent of my ability I shall take care . . . that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the States. . . . I trust this will not be regarded as a menace, but only as the declared purpose of the Union that it will constitutionally defend and maintain itself. . . . The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the Government, and to collect the duties and imposts.”

He then goes on to say that he will not use force unnecessarily,—that he will not, for instance, attempt to fill the Federal offices where the public opinion of the region is so hostile as to render the attempt irritating and nearly impracticable. But this is evidently a mere matter of detail. There is not a line in the whole paper that evinces the slightest doubt in his mind as to the course to be pursued. He does not, it is true, give any precise summary of the situation; he does not say in so many words that



the Government will not tolerate the independence of the seceding States. But this is obviously because he does not care to raise the issue in this form. He prefers to "consider . . . the Union unbroken"; "acts of violence," he says, "within any State or States, against the authority of the United States, are insurrectionary or revolutionary, according to circumstances." The responsibility for such acts falls, he points out, exclusively upon the doers of them. In carrying out his policy, "there needs to be," he says, "no bloodshed or violence; and there shall be none unless it be forced upon the national authority. . . . In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen," he closes, "and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors."

The calm, serious tone of warning and remonstrance which pervades the whole address shows the characteristic political ability of its author. Few men in America, if any, have been the equals of Abraham Lincoln in political sagacity. He fully recognized the great importance of having the attitude and intentions of the new administration clearly defined in this manifesto of its policy, and at the same time so stated as to give no ground for any charge of unfairness or of harshness in his treatment of those whose views were controverted, and whose cherished purposes were declared impossible of attainment.

The Inaugural was written mainly for the people of the Northern and Border States. It was intended to prepare the former for the almost inevitable con-

flict, by furnishing them with a clear, temperate, reasonable statement of the attitude of the Government in reference to the seceding States,—a statement which would make them feel that the *onus* of beginning the struggle rested upon the disunionists. It was also intended to strengthen the Union cause in those slave States which had not then seceded, by the presentation of the considerations above given, and also by the unmistakable declaration of the purpose of the Government to resort to arms in case of necessity. But it is not probable that Mr. Lincoln expected that any of the States which had then seceded would be persuaded by his appeal to re-enter the Union.

Mr. Lincoln's statement of his views on the question of the right of secession is important and interesting. "The Union," he says, "is much older than the Constitution. It was formed, in fact, by the Articles of Association in 1774. It was matured and continued by the Declaration of Independence. It was further matured, and the faith of all the then thirteen States expressly plighted and engaged that it should be perpetual, by the Articles of Confederation in 1778. And finally, in 1787, one of the declared objects for ordaining and establishing the Constitution was 'to form a more perfect Union.'"

Mr. Lincoln therefore recognized the historical fact, that no State had ever had a separate national existence, or, in truth, any existence at all save as a State in the Union,—one of the States constituting the United States of America. He did not, it is true, state in so many words that this historical fact might

with equal accuracy be expressed by the statement that the only national existence in this country had been that of the United States,—that, as a matter of fact, there never had been more than one nation here, and that the United States was that nation. But he spoke of “the *national troubles*,” and of his hopes that there would be a peaceful solution of them; he adjured the secessionists to pause before they attempted “the destruction of our *national fabric*”; he considered the suggestions then mooted to amend “the *national constitution*”; he deprecated resistance to the “*national authority*.” There could be no doubt whatever as to his position on the question of the *nationality* of the whole country.

The attitude of the new administration, therefore, on the question of the right of the Government to retain possession of the two forts in the seceding States which yet remained under the flag, was clear. Fort Pickens, which had been saved to the United States by the firmness and courage of its commanding officer, Lieutenant Slemmer, had been secured for the time being at any rate, by sending to the harbor of Pensacola a competent naval force, with a detachment of soldiers, who were to be landed if any occasion should arise for their services, each side agreeing that the situation should not be disturbed without giving notice. The new administration, naturally desirous of terminating this precarious state of things, and apparently indifferent to the terms of the agreement, ordered these troops to be put into the fort at once, and sent other reinforcements; but, owing to unforeseen delays, it was not until the middle of April that

the post was adequately manned. As for Fort Sumter, its situation had been for the past two months becoming daily more and more perilous. The enemy's batteries were constantly increasing in efficiency, and it was now very questionable whether the harbor was not entirely closed to any vessels of war which might be sent to reinforce or supply the garrison of the fort. On the fourth of March there were provisions on hand for only about six weeks longer.

The Secretary of War, it will be remembered, had left it to Major Anderson to decide when the proper time should arrive for the Government to send supplies and reinforcements to his beleaguered command, and Anderson, as we have seen, feeling sure that any attempt of the kind would induce the enemy to attack him and thus bring on the civil war which he so much deprecated, had never requested either reinforcements or supplies. But he had on the last day of February asked the opinion of his officers on the possibility of reinforcing the post, and on the number of troops that would be required; and he had, on the same day, forwarded their replies, together with a statement of his own, to the Secretary of War.¹ His own estimate was that 20,000 men would be required for the task. In this opinion several of his officers concurred; the remainder put the number at a much lower figure. The plan suggested was to capture the enemy's works at Fort Moultrie, and on Morris Island and Cumming's Point, which it was assumed would be defended

¹ Whether Anderson's estimates were furnished in obedience to a request of the Secretary, or of his own motion, does not appear.

vigorously by several thousand men from South Carolina and the neighboring States.

There can be no dispute as to the general correctness of Major Anderson's judgment as to the nature of the problem. To hold Fort Sumter permanently, involved without doubt the capture of the works which surrounded it; and this was an operation of very considerable magnitude. His estimate was, also, within bounds. It would have taken at least 20,000 men, of the only kind which were then available,—militia,—to have captured the surrounding works, and it may well be doubted whether they could have done it, for it was a task which only experienced troops could have attempted with any certainty of success. Major Anderson undoubtedly thought that it was out of the question for the new administration to organize such a force before his stock of provisions would be exhausted; he was, therefore, very much in hopes that he would soon receive orders to evacuate the fort.

The new President acted in this emergency with good judgment. He consulted his Cabinet. He asked his Secretary of War, Mr. Cameron, to give him an opinion in writing. General Scott wrote out his views. The Chief of Engineers, General Totten, gave his professional judgment. As a military question, there was no substantial difference of opinion between the heads of the army and the officers at Fort Sumter. If Fort Sumter was permanently to be held, the control of Charleston Harbor must be secured, and that would require offensive operations of considerable magnitude and difficulty, which

could only be successful after a serious and bloody conflict.

Captain Fox of the navy proposed a scheme for throwing provisions, and perhaps troops, into the fort. It was not expected that more than temporary relief to the garrison could be effected in this way; but it was thought possible, and, in fact, probable, that as much as this could be done.

It did not take long to satisfy the President that an expedition to Charleston Harbor organized on a scale sufficient to overcome the enemy's works and place Fort Sumter permanently out of danger, was utterly out of the question. The troops could not be had.

This question then came up,—Should the Government adopt Fox's plan, and endeavor to afford Anderson temporary relief? Was it worth while for this object to run the almost certain chance that the relieving force, or Fort Sumter itself, or both, would be attacked by the South Carolinians and a civil war begun? Would it not be better on every ground, now that a really satisfactory military solution of the question had been shown to be impossible, to order Anderson to evacuate the post and leave Charleston Harbor?

It is not likely that the President came immediately to a decision on this most important subject. He laid the matter, as we have seen, before his Cabinet, and we have in writing the responses, given at two different dates, of the members of the administration. On the 15th of March, when the question was first presented to them and it was made plain

that nothing could be expected of lasting utility from any course that it was then in the power of the Government to adopt, but that, on the other hand, the sending of an expedition merely to supply the garrison with provisions was morally certain to bring about a civil war, only one member of the Cabinet, Mr. Blair, was unequivocally in favor of making the attempt. Mr. Chase, though recording himself as on the same side, expressly made his approval conditional on his belief that civil war would not result from the step proposed to be taken. Some of the others treated the question as a mere matter of military advisability, and had no hesitation in saying that as Fort Sumter would have to be abandoned ultimately, the sooner Anderson was removed the better. The Secretary of State, Mr. Seward, based his argument against the proposal on his belief that the true policy, for the moment, at any rate, was one of peace and conciliation. Only Mr. Blair appreciated the fact, and dared to state it clearly, that the evacuation of Sumter, without an effort to maintain it, would confirm the disunionists of the South in the belief—long openly and loudly expressed—that Northern men lacked the courage to defend their position.

Encouraged by the general voice of his associates, Mr. Seward presumed upon his position as the chief officer in the Cabinet to speak with authority as to the plans and purposes of the Government. The Confederate Congress had sent to Washington three commissioners, Messrs. Crawford, Forsyth, and Roman to treat with the Federal Government for

the rendition of Forts Sumter and Pickens, and on all matters of dispute between the two powers. To them, Seward caused it to be reported semi-officially that the Cabinet had decided to evacuate Fort Sumter. It is not needful for us to enter into the story of the mission of these commissioners; we will simply say that there was, so far as we can find, no promise given by Mr. Seward on behalf of the Government that the fort should be given up, and no promise given by the commissioners as the consideration for any such agreement. The contrary was maintained by Jefferson Davis in his review of the circumstances in his first Message to the Confederate Congress, but the evidence does not bear him out. Assurances and predictions there were in plenty; but of any agreement there is not a sign.

Mr. Lincoln, after receiving the opinions of his constitutional advisers, considered the matter further. On March 29th he called them together again. By this time he had made up his own mind, and no doubt the reasons which influenced him had had their weight also with his associates. This time the general feeling of the Cabinet was in favor of making the attempt to supply Anderson with provisions, at least. The fleet was, however, to carry troops also; but they were not to be landed unless opposition should be made to furnishing the garrison with provisions. Mr. Seward, however, adhered to his original opinion, and was supported by the Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Smith. Mr. Chase had clearly advanced in his views: "If war," said he, "is to be the result, I perceive no reason why it

may not be best begun in consequence of military resistance to the efforts of the administration to sustain troops of the Union, stationed under the authority of the Government, in a fort of the Union, in the ordinary course of service."

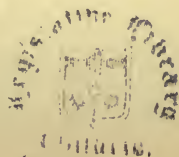
That nothing might be wanting to make the precise object of the expedition known to the authorities of South Carolina, a clerk of the State Department was despatched to Governor Pickens, informing him officially that an attempt would be made "to supply Fort Sumter with provisions only, and that if such attempt be not resisted, no effort to throw in men, arms, or ammunition" would "be made without further notice, or in case of an attack on the fort."¹ This message was given to the Governor on April 8th.

Mr. Lincoln unquestionably expected that resistance would be made and the fort attacked. And he could hardly have looked for a successful defence. But his object was not a military one, but a purely political one. War was reasonably sure to come sooner or later; but the longer it was deferred, the more would people get accustomed to the idea of a Southern Confederacy,—of a distinct nation in the territory of the old United States. If the independence of the seceding States was not to be tolerated, it must not be allowed to continue too long unhindered. For this reason it would not answer to evacuate the remaining military posts without resistance, even if the chances were against a successful defence of them. The effect of this would

¹ 1 W. R., 291.

inevitably be to admit by acts, which in such emergencies count for more than words, that to all intents and purposes the Southern Confederacy had established itself. Then the occasion presented by this opportunity to provision Fort Sumter was a most unique one. Nothing could be imagined better calculated to arouse the national feeling than an attack made, without the slightest provocation on their part, upon Anderson and his little force. The heart of the nation was certain to be deeply moved by the spectacle of this small garrison, holding steadfastly and bravely the only remaining stronghold of the Union on the South Atlantic coast, reduced to their last stock of provisions, anxiously expecting from the Government the supplies of which their enemies were well aware they were greatly in need, heroically defending themselves against vastly superior numbers, and loyally and gallantly maintaining the honor of the flag of their country. If war was to come, this was assuredly the most fortunate way in which it could originate, —judging from the standpoint of the Federal Government. It would, not only in the general opinion, but strictly speaking, have been forced upon the nation by the disunionists. For there was not a nation on earth which would not have sprung to arms after such an act as an attack on Fort Sumter.

Accordingly, Captain Fox was despatched with his expedition. One vessel, the *Powhatan*, was detached from it, however, by a most irregular, not to say culpable, act of interference on the part of Mr.



Seward. But this in all probability made no difference in the result.

On the 11th of April, General Beauregard sent to Major Anderson a formal demand for the surrender of Fort Sumter, which the Major courteously, but decidedly, refused. But he said to Beauregard's aides, who brought him the summons, that he should be out of provisions in a few days. In consequence of this remark, Beauregard offered not to attack him if he would state when he would evacuate the post, and would agree in the meantime to refrain from hostilities. To this last condition, however, Anderson could not agree, inasmuch as if the relieving force should make its appearance, he must, of course, be free to support it by his guns. Accordingly, at half-past four on the morning of the 12th of April, 1861, the Confederate batteries opened their fire. The bombardment continued without cessation till the next afternoon. The enemy's mortar-batteries soon rendered it too hazardous for Anderson, with his small garrison, to man the barbette guns, from which he had expected the most execution, and his fire was confined to the casemate guns, which did not do great damage. On the 13th the hot shot fired by the enemy ignited the barracks,¹ and for a time, put the magazine in serious peril. The officers and men behaved with the greatest coolness and heroism, and the fire was finally got under.

¹ Why Anderson, in anticipation of such an occurrence, had not, previous to the bombardment, levelled all his combustible buildings, is a question which has sometimes been asked. See 1 Greeley, 444. The reason undoubtedly was that he had not men enough for such a task. "The task was enormous, impracticable."—Major John Johnson, in a letter to the writer.

The fort could probably now have been held some days longer, although, owing to the consumption of all the provisions except pork, and to the exhaustion of the officers and men, the garrison would have suffered a good deal. The supply of cartridges, too, had given out, and no effective reply could be made to the enemy's guns. Still, there was certainly a chance that the fleet, which could plainly be seen outside the bar,¹ might come into the harbor, or, at least, send supplies or reinforcements to the fort. Anderson, however, thought that he and his men had done and suffered enough. He had maintained the honor of the flag; he had for two days gallantly defended the post. Accordingly, when Beauregard's aides, whom that officer had most considerately sent during the conflagration of the barracks, to tender assistance on the ground of humanity, arrived, the Major was willing to consider favorably the honorable terms of surrender which they were empowered to offer. On Sunday, the 14th, Major Anderson saluted his flag with fifty guns, and, with his command, was conveyed to the fleet outside, to be taken to New York.

Thus ended the first siege of Fort Sumter. One is amazed that the Confederate authorities were willing that the war should be begun in this way. If they had desired to unite the North against the States which had seceded, they could not have found a better mode of accomplishing their purpose. It

¹ The detachment of the frigate *Powhatan* made it impossible for Fox to carry his original plan into execution. He intended, however, to make an attempt to get in on the night of the 13th. But Sumter was surrendered in the afternoon. I W. R., II.

is no doubt true that the retention of Fort Sumter by the United States Government indicated the unwillingness of that Government to admit the claim of South Carolina to be considered an independent nation. But it was not an act of war. Merely to protract for a time, even for a considerable time, a condition of things once satisfactory to both parties, certainly cannot be considered an act of war. Even the refusal of the United States Government to comply with the demand for the surrender of the fort, while it showed, undoubtedly, that the Government was not willing at that time to acknowledge the independence of the State, was still consistent with the preservation of peace. It is true that the attempts at negotiation which had been tried by South Carolina and by the Confederate Government had been so far unsuccessful. They could, however, be tried again; or they could be abandoned, and war could be tried. This last was what the Confederate authorities decided to do; it is useless for Southern writers to attempt to evade the responsibility for beginning the civil war. The effort to supply provisions to the garrison furnishes no justification for the attack on the fort. The effort to put a thousand men, or guns and ammunition, into the fort, might have furnished such a justification, for it would have directly increased the military power of the work. But to attempt to send provisions to that small garrison was no act of war; it was simply a measure necessary for the continuance of the existing state of things until it should be terminated either by negotiation or by violence. It was an act of war there-

upon to bombard the fort, which, even if it had received the supplies intended for it, would only have occupied the same relation to the conflicting parties which it had occupied theretofore.

The civil war, then, was unquestionably begun by the Confederate States; and, it must be added, in a most unwise and inconsiderate manner. Far better for them would it have been if their authorities had taken Mr. Lincoln at his word and allowed provisions to be freely furnished to the little garrison of Sumter, and had then claimed the credit due to an act of considerate forbearance. Not a shot should have been fired. The return of the fleet, having landed the provisions only and brought back the troops, certainly could not have roused the patriotism of the North; it would rather in all probability have given occasion to severe though unjust attacks on the Government, for what would have been termed its weak and half-hearted policy. It would have been far wiser for the Confederate authorities to have waited until President Lincoln had undertaken some aggressive operation, or until he had so long delayed doing so, that the world would have said that he had, by his inaction, acquiesced in the establishment of the new nation.



NOTES TO CHAPTER V.

1. Mr. Lincoln's statement in his Inaugural, quoted above, that the Union "was formed in fact, by the Articles of Association in 1774," is, curiously enough, almost identical with a statement of Mr. Stephens, the Vice-President of the Southern Confederacy, made in his elaborate work, *The War between the States* (vol. 1., p. 19). Mr. Stephens says: "The first Union, so formed, from which the present Union arose, was that of the Colonies in 1774."

It is not to be supposed that either Mr. Lincoln or Mr. Stephens held that this action of the Colonies in 1774, which was two years before the Declaration of Independence, had, or could have had, any force or effect, while they remained colonies of Great Britain, except so far as their union was tolerated by the authority of Great Britain. The statement as to the union of the Colonies in 1774 is, however, important, and of very great importance, too, as showing that, in the judgment of two representative men, the communities which, prior to 1776, were colonies of Great Britain, and, after that date, called themselves States, were, as a matter of fact, at the moment they asserted their independence, already united. Or, to put the case in another way, what appeared above the political horizon on the 4th of July, 1776, was not thirteen separate communities, but thirteen

united communities. Each of these communities was undoubtedly, in a sense, sovereign, for the political power held by it had not been derived from, and was not held under, any political superior. Each of them was also an autonomous community. But as a matter of fact no one of them had ever existed or acted, was then claiming to exist or act, or did then in fact exist or act, as an independent nation. Existing and acting in union, they, together, constituted a new nation, of which they were the sovereign rulers. This nation was composed of the thirteen States; but each State preserved its identity; the people of all the States never acted *en masse*; all political action was taken by the States; the Constitution was adopted by the States, each acting individually.

Yet there was but one nation. The powers actually exercised by the States severally, stopped a long way short of those belonging to a nation. All international relations were assumed by the States acting together,—as a single nation.

2. It may be noted in this connection that the secessionists of 1861 did not use the word nations as applying to the original thirteen States; they preferred to speak of them as sovereign States. But there is no middle term. Every civilized community must be, in the nature of things, either a nation or a part of a nation; and the fact was, that these thirteen States, sovereign in the sense above explained, being, as they were, united at the very moment when their independent political existence began, constituted together one nation,—known then and always as the United States of America.



CHAPTER VI.

THE CALL TO ARMS.

THE effect produced by the capture of Fort Sumter was instantaneous and universal throughout the North. No one who did not witness the patriotic enthusiasm of that moment can form any conception of it. It was, in truth, simply magnificent. The Northern public trembled with indignation at the news of the unprovoked attack on Anderson's little garrison, of the outrage committed in compelling the flag of the country to be lowered from the ramparts of Fort Sumter. The sentiment of the people was strong, and outspoken beyond measure; it was also universal. Men who had looked on the crisis as the natural result of an unjustifiable anti-slavery policy, who had ingeniously defended the Southern positions, who had even threatened to use force in case there should be an attempt to conquer the seceded States, were now among the foremost in asserting their devotion to the Union. The Northern people felt that their forbearance had been despised, that their toleration had been repaid by violence, and that the time for action had come. They were ready for war, and for war to the bitter end.

President Lincoln, who, with his marvellous

sagacity for divining the sentiment of the country, did not need to wait until it had been expressed through the ordinary organs of public opinion, instantly saw his opportunity. He immediately issued a proclamation, setting forth that for some time past the laws of the United States had been opposed and their execution obstructed in South Carolina and other States by combinations too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings, or by the powers vested by law in the marshals; and stating that he had thought fit to call forth the militia of the several States to the number of 75,000 men "to suppress said combinations and to cause the laws to be duly executed." The terms of this proclamation are curiously legal and technical, and one cannot help observing how carefully the main facts of the situation are ignored, and a character attributed to the movement in the South which was certainly far from descriptive of the events actually taking place there. Mr. Lincoln speaks of the States which had seceded as States, implying that they are still in the Union; he does not even mention the fact that they had passed ordinances of secession, and were claiming to be independent nations. He treats the whole affair as if it were an insurrection; he even commands "the persons composing the combinations aforesaid to disperse and retire peaceably to their respective abodes within twenty days." This, under the circumstances, in view of the unopposed formation of a Southern Confederacy, is really ludicrous in its minimizing of the facts of the situation. We are told by Mr.

Lincoln's biographers that this paper was drafted by himself¹; and no doubt the President had his reasons for framing his call to arms in the way he did. Very likely he may have thought that it would only give additional strength to the claims of the disunionists, and an unnecessary recognition of the formidable character of the movement, to state in so many words that seven States had undertaken to leave the Union and were claiming their independence. At that time, also, American statesmen were by no means clear in their minds as to the legal or political effect of an ordinance of secession on a State which had passed one. Mr. Lincoln may also have thought it more politic to call on the people for troops to suppress unlawful combinations than to ask them for troops to conquer and subdue communities, which had so lately been States in the Union, but which were now bent, with a determination that was equally surprising and formidable, on effecting an absolute separation from their former associates. Besides these considerations, the phraseology of this proclamation was no doubt determined largely by the requirements of the statute under which the President was authorized to make the call for troops.

With a unanimity and heartiness which astonished the most sagacious observers, the Northern States responded to the President's appeal. Several States tendered more men than their due proportions of the number required. The zeal and enthusiasm of the people knew no bounds.

¹ 4 N. & H., 77.

The President's demand for troops met with a prompt and angry refusal from the authorities of the Border States. However much the people of these States may have disapproved of the attack on Fort Sumter, they utterly refused to take part in a war the object of which, in spite of the inoffensive terms in which it was expressed in the proclamation, was plainly seen to be the conquest of the States which had seceded. The institution of slavery had rendered the whole South to a great extent a unit in any political action. We cannot here show, for it is not within the scope of this book, in what ways slavery affected the modes of life, habits of thought, and political views of the people of the slave-holding States. Suffice it to say, that, as all the world knows, there did exist among them a community of sentiment irrespective, to a great extent, of State lines and of State interests. Thus, while Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, and Missouri were drawn to the Northern rather than to the Cotton and Gulf States by many practical considerations, and by the usually controlling reasons of inter-State commerce, their sentiments were, as a rule, on the side of the other slave-holding States which had left the Union. So that, when the issue was sharply drawn, and they were asked to furnish their quotas of men to put down the seceding States, they not only refused to comply, but a large portion of their people strongly urged making common cause with South Carolina and the other States of the Southern Confederacy. In fact, Virginia, North Carolina, Arkansas, and Tennessee promptly passed ordinances of

secession, and joined the new Confederacy. And, although Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri remained in the Union, yet the feeling of a considerable part of the people in each of these States in favor of the new movement was so strong,—aided, as it was, by the conviction that their States would have seceded had it not been for the active interference of the United States Government,—that the Southern cause obtained substantial aid from each of them.

The conduct of those persons who, being citizens of States which remained in the Union, fought on the side of the Confederacy, while natural enough under the circumstances, is certainly not easy to justify. Perhaps the case of the French *émigrés* of 1792 comes nearer to it than any other in history. It hardly needs to be said that it was a position which cannot be defended politically from any standpoint. No citizen can legitimately fight against his country because he thinks his country ought to have joined with the powers which are opposing it and its allies. He may be right or he may be wrong in his opinion; it matters nothing, so far as his political duty is concerned. That duty is plain; it is to fight, if he fights at all, under the flag of his country. And just as the impartial historian must freely admit that those Virginians or North Carolinians, who sincerely and strenuously opposed up to the last moment the secession of their States, ought, if they held to the dogma that their State was their country, to have proffered their services to their respective States as soon as they had seceded, so must we distinctly declare that those Marylanders, Kentuckians, and Missourians who

served in the Confederate army were, tried by the test of State allegiance, rebels against their respective States.¹ The truth is, the slave-holding States had a great deal in common; their civilization was of a different type from that of the Northern States; and although they differed also in many respects from each other, there was yet a common bond in the fact that their society contained the institution of slavery, —an institution which, by making the white race the masters of the negroes, enlisted in its behalf those powerful feelings which have in all history animated a ruling class when its domination has been challenged or attacked. For this reason it was found that the dogma that the State was alone entitled to the allegiance of its citizens did not work with unvarying regularity and efficiency in the case of those slave States which did not secede. Many of the leading men in those States, led by Breckenridge of Kentucky, who had been Vice-President of the United States, fought against the Union. Large contingents were furnished to the armies of the Southern Confederacy from Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri. There were also attempts on the part of some prominent men at an evasion of the principle of State allegiance. Of these the most conspicuous was that of General Hood, who, when he found that his State, Kentucky, was not going to secede, as he had hoped and desired it would, changed his domicile to Texas, at the outbreak of the war, so that he might, nominally at any rate, keep within the rule.² There were

¹ For a justification of their course see Davis's *Rise and Fall*, vol. I., pp. 399 *et seq.*, where Breckenridge gives his own defence at length.

² *Hood's Advance and Retreat*, 16.

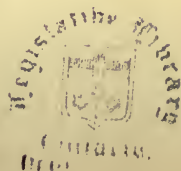
instances worse than this : Cooper, a New York man, the Adjutant General of the United States army, resigned his commission and went over to the enemy, and so did a few other Northern men who had become by marriage or otherwise identified with the South. And we cannot pass without a word of mention the case of "the venerable" Edmund Ruffin, of Virginia, who fired the first gun at Fort Sumter.¹ This man, a fanatic on the subject of slavery, was on any and every theory in the wrong. It is simply impossible to allege any justification for his action. In the fort at which, while his State was still in the Union, he pointed his gun, was a Virginian, a gallant young officer of engineers, who did his full share of duty under Major Anderson, but who, when his State seceded, resigned his commission in the United States army and tendered his services to the authorities of his own State. We can appreciate the position of Lieutenant Meade and can respect him ; but we confess ourselves unable to understand why Ruffin might not, if he had been captured, have been hung to the nearest tree, as a traitor both to his own State and to the United States, and, also, if it is worth while to say so, as a man who coveted the honor of initiating a tremendous civil war.

It is not necessary for the purpose of this book that we should describe the events by which Missouri and Kentucky were prevented from joining the Confederacy. Nor is it needful to tell here the exciting story of the rising of the secessionists in Baltimore, of the temporary isolation of Washington,

¹ I W. R., 35, 46, 54.

and of its final occupation by the troops of Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania. Suffice it to say that, by the latter part of April, Washington was sufficiently garrisoned,—that about a fortnight later, Baltimore was re-occupied,—and that by the middle of June, Missouri had been secured to the Union. Kentucky, also, which during the spring and summer had endeavored to maintain an attitude of neutrality, was forced by the middle of September to declare unequivocally for the Union.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE OPPOSING PARTIES.

THUS the lines were finally drawn. Twenty-two States remained united. These States, if the views which we have advocated above be correct, possessed now the entire sovereignty of the nation known as the United States of America. They were preparing to assert this sovereignty by force of arms over the whole length and breadth of the land. Opposed to them stood the eleven States which had seceded, now constituting the Confederate States of America, equally resolute to maintain by the sword their claim to independence.

The parties to this conflict were in many respects unequally matched. The populations of the twenty-two States which adhered to the Union aggregated upwards of twenty-two millions, of whom less than half a million were slaves. The populations of the eleven States which had left the Union numbered together but little over nine millions, of whom about three millions and a half were slaves. There were thus about four times as many free white people on the Union side as there were on the Confederate side. The slaves, however, instead of being a source of anxiety and apprehension, as many in the North con-

fidently predicted would be the case, proved perfectly subordinate. They were trusted to take care of the families where the able-bodied white men had gone to the war, and they never betrayed their trust. They were largely employed in building fortifications. They raised the crops on which the entire South subsisted during the whole war.

In material prosperity the North was far in advance of the South. In accumulated capital, there was no comparison between the two sections. The immigration from Europe had kept the labor market of the North well stocked, while no immigrants from Ireland or Germany were willing to enter into a competition with negro slaves. The North was full of manufactories of all kinds; the South had very few of any kind. The railroad systems of the North were far more perfect and extensive, and the roads were much better supplied with rolling-stock and all needed apparatus. The North was infinitely richer than the South in the production of grain and of meat, and the boasted value of the South's great staple,—cotton,—sank out of sight when the blockade closed the Southern ports to all commerce.

Accompanying these greater material resources there existed in the North a much larger measure of business capacity than was to be found in the South. This was of course to be expected, for the life of the plantation was not calculated to familiarize one with business methods, or to create an aptitude for dealing with affairs on a large scale. The great merchants and managers of large railroads and other similar enterprises in the North were able to render

valuable assistance to the men who administered the State and National governments, and their aid was most generously given.

The command of the sea naturally fell at once into the hands of the North. With the exception of the losses caused by the unnecessary destruction of the vessels of war in the Gosport navy-yard near Norfolk, Virginia, in April, 1861, and by the evacuation of the yard itself, the whole fleet of the United States, all the permanent establishments, except the navy-yard at Pensacola, and the entire *personnel* of the navy, with the exception of a comparatively few officers, remained under the control of the Government. There were by no means so many resignations from the regular navy as from the regular army. To the naval officer, whether at sea or in a foreign port, the United States must always have appeared as one nation. The flag under which he sailed was contrasted with the flags of the nations of Europe. He could not but feel—as a rule, that is—that his country was the country which the Stars and Stripes represented, and not the State of his origin. Hence there were comparatively few instances of naval officers who resigned their commissions and tendered their services to their States. Yet there were some instances of this; Buchanan, Tatnall, Semmes, and Hollins were perhaps the most conspicuous of these. On the other hand, Farragut, who rose to the head of the navy during the war, and whose achievements at New Orleans and Mobile Bay won for him the greatest distinction, came from a State which seceded, Tennessee.

Moreover, the mercantile marine of the United States, which, in 1861, was second only to that of Great Britain, was almost wholly owned in the North. It was chiefly in the New England States that the ships were built. The sailors, so far as they were Americans at all, and the greater part of them were Americans, were all Northerners. The owners were nearly all merchants in the Northern Atlantic cities. Hence the government had no difficulty in recruiting the navy to any extent, both in officers and men, from a large class thoroughly familiar with the sea.

The regular army suffered to a very marked extent by the resignation of officers belonging in the States which had seceded. The privates and non-commissioned officers with hardly an exception remained faithful to the flag, and continued loyally to serve the Government.¹ Not a few officers also, belonging in the seceding States, of whom the most distinguished were General Scott and Major (afterwards Major-General) George H. Thomas, were unable to see their duty from the standpoint from which the majority of their people viewed it. They recognized the United States as their country, and

¹ The neglect of Mr. Buchanan's administration to reply to General Twiggs's repeated requests for instructions, and to give to that officer seasonable orders to concentrate the troops in his Department (Texas), and to proceed at once to the North with all his troops, guns, and supplies, was, in our judgment, in great part at least, the cause of the surrender of his command. It is certainly extremely probable that Twiggs, who, as soon as he had surrendered, went over to the enemy, did not act towards his government in good faith; but prompt orders might very possibly have rendered the execution of any treasonable design on his part a very difficult matter, and one which he would not have attempted. See I W. R., 579-582.

cheerfully remained in the army and served throughout the war.

It may be remarked that both sides had to depend to a considerable extent on Europe for supplies of arms and ammunition. This was, of course, much more true of the South than of the North, for the principal arsenals and manufactories of arms were situated in the Northern States. But so far as importations were needed, it was obviously a perfectly simple matter for the North to procure them, while the vessels containing these precious cargoes for the South were always compelled to run the blockade, and were often captured in the attempt.

The financial situation of the North was, as has been intimated above, vastly superior to that of the South. There was but one way in which the South could have procured the means of buying abroad the vessels, guns, and equipments of which she stood so greatly in need. Had the Confederate Government promptly seized all the cotton in the country, paying for it at the market price in Confederate money, and sent it to England before the blockade had become fully established, and there stored it, to be sold from time to time as occasion might require, available funds would have been forthcoming sufficient to meet the largest requirements. But this course, though suggested, was not carried out, and the finances of the Southern Confederacy fell into the most deplorable condition long before the end of the war.

Superior as the North was in numbers and in resources of every kind, and important as was her command of the sea, it was nevertheless by no means

certain that she would succeed in the task which she had laid out for herself. The conquest of the eleven States was in truth a gigantic undertaking. The attempt was certain to be resisted by practically the entire population. This resistance would be made under the direction of generals of high attainments, of acknowledged ability, and of some experience in war. It would be made by upwards of five millions of people of pure American stock, who would be certain to fight with all the fierceness and determination of men fighting in defence of their country against invasion and conquest. There would be on the side of the South no hesitations, no dissensions, no thoughts of surrender. Whatever would be gained would have to be won by hard fighting. It was not possible that the North should make her numerical superiority count to its full extent on a battle-field in the South,—that would necessitate a migration of her entire population to the region to be invaded. All that an invading power, even if greatly superior in population, can effect, is to preserve a certain superiority in numbers on the theatre of war; how great that superiority shall be, must depend on the means of transportation and subsistence, and on the number of men required to hold the lines of communication and supply. The number which can be ranged in line of battle on any particular field cannot, therefore, be decided beforehand, unless the most careful study has been given to the question by the military authorities. It should also be remembered that while in an invasion every step taken in advance necessarily carries the active army

farther from its base of supplies and from its reinforcements, the enemy are by the same causes impelled towards a concentration of their available forces, so that, whatever disparity of strength may have existed at the outset, it is quite possible that at the moment of the decisive collision the forces may be practically equal.

Finally, if we would estimate correctly the relative power of the parties to this conflict, we must take account of their respective aptitudes for war. The South undoubtedly possessed a more military population than the North, and we do not find that one part of the South excelled another—to any marked degree, at any rate—in the possession of military instincts and aptitudes. Several of the Southern States—Virginia, South Carolina, and Louisiana among others—possessed excellent military academies. The population, almost wholly occupied in agricultural pursuits, was necessarily accustomed to life in the open air, to horses, to hunting and fishing, to exposure, to unusual physical exertion from time to time. Such conditions of life naturally foster a martial spirit. Then the aristocratic *régime* which prevailed in the slave-holding States was conducive to that preference of military over civil pursuits which has so generally been characteristic of aristocracies. The young men of the better classes eagerly embraced the profession of arms, as offering by far the noblest opportunities for the exercise of the higher virtues and for attaining the greatest distinction in the State. They made excellent officers, while those below them in the social scale, sharing

as they did largely in the same feelings, and possessed by the same ideas of life and duty, made admirable private soldiers and warrant officers. Endowed with a marvellous capacity of endurance, whether of physical exertion or of lack of food, uncomplaining, ever ready for a fight, the soldiers of the South were first-rate material in the hands of the able officers who so generally commanded them. Their want of strict discipline was, it is true, notorious, but it was chiefly noticeable on the march, where straggling, to an extent unknown in the Federal armies, was a not infrequent feature. They loved fighting for its own sake, and no more willing troops ever responded to the call of their leaders. Their knowledge of woodcraft, gained by lives spent on the plantation or the farm, was always of great service, and often gave them a decided advantage over the numerous town-bred soldiers of the Federal armies.

In the North, on the other hand, there was very little of this enthusiastic sentiment about a military life. One may fairly say that it was rarely to be seen in the Eastern and Middle States ; and although it is true that the young men of the West responded with more unanimity and probably with more alacrity to the often repeated summonses to leave peaceful pursuits and take the field, yet this was rather due to the comparative newness of the civilization in the West than to any specific martial quality in the population. The truth is, that the Northern people, whether in the East or the West, were busy, pre-occupied, full of schemes for the development of

the country, and for the acquisition of private fortunes; happy and contented in their manifold industries, they detested equally the wastefulness and the cruel sacrifices inseparable from fighting. The poetry of war hardly entered into the mind of the Northern volunteer; most certainly the *gaudium certaminis* did not influence his decision to enlist. His course was determined wholly by a sense of duty; for he looked upon the war as a grievous interruption to the course of his own life as well as to the normal development of his country's history. He regarded the Southerners as wholly to blame; and he determined to put them down, cost what it might. His devotion to his country was as deep and strong and unreserved as was that of his Southern opponent; he was as brave, as patient, as unfaltering, as persistent; but he did not take so much interest in the game; he went into camp, he drilled, he marched, he fought, without a thought of saving himself either labor or danger; but it was all weary work to him—distasteful; in his judgment the whole thing was unbecoming a country as far advanced in civilization as the United States was,—it was a sort of anachronism. Hence it cannot be doubted that the Southern volunteers frequently scored successes over their Northern adversaries for the simple and sole reason that to them the game of war was not only a perfectly legitimate pursuit, but one of the noblest, if not the noblest, that could claim the devotion of brave and free men. They went into it *con amore*; they gave to its duties their most zealous attention; and they reaped a full measure of the suc-

cess which those who throw themselves with all their hearts into any career deserve and generally attain.¹

Taking all these things together, then, it was plain enough that the task of subjugating the South was certain to be one of great difficulty, even though the resources of the North were so much superior to those of the South. It was also unlikely that the resources of the North would be employed with any great amount of skill and judgment, at any rate at first. The President of the United States was known to be a man of no military training or experience. He was hardly likely to find, at the outset, generals who could plan and carry out the campaigns of invasion which the scheme of conquest required for its accomplishment. The Southern President, on the other hand, was a military man by education and experience; he had been graduated from the Military Academy; he had distinguished himself at Monterey and Buena Vista; he had been Secretary of War. His army-list was certain to be made out intelligently, and it was known that he had a choice of excellent officers from among whom to select his ranking generals.

When we add to the considerations above presented that the South was about to fight for her own defence against invasion, to struggle for her independence against armies which were undertaking to conquer her, it was easy to see that all her energies would be aroused, and that it might safely be predicted that the advantage would not always be on the side of the heaviest battalions.

¹ Cf. Palfrey's *Antietam and Fredericksburg*, pp. 125, 126.

NOTE TO CHAPTER VII.

The right of an officer in the regular army or navy to resign his commission and take service under the flag of his State, as so many of the officers from the seceding States did, has been very often questioned. It has been urged against their conduct that they had sworn allegiance to the United States, and that whatever might or might not be permissible for civilians, they, at any rate, were bound in honor to stand by the flag of the United States.

But, when it is recollected that each of these men believed that his State was his country, and that the United States was only a number of separate nations (of which his State had been one) which had united themselves together by a treaty which each one of them had as much right to terminate as any nation has to terminate any treaty, it is plain that he was justified in regarding his obligation to remain in the service of the United States as determinable by the decision of his own State to remain in or withdraw from the Union. If his premises were correct, it was surely not to be expected that the States which chose to remain should retain the entire military and naval establishments of the Union, or should expect the continuance in their service of citizens of States which had seceded from the Union, and were carry-

ing on an independent political existence. In fact, on the theory of the separate nationality of each State, the case of an officer in the service of the United States was precisely like that of any officer in the service of a foreign country. There have been many such cases within our experience. English officers have entered the service of Turkey; American officers have entered the service of the Khedive of Egypt. No one surely would expect these gentlemen to remain in the service of these foreign powers if their own nations were likely to become engaged in a war against those powers. Every one would expect them, in the event of a war becoming imminent, promptly to resign; and every one would admit that if they, on resigning, turned over all the men and material under their control to the governments under which they had been serving, they had done their full duty as honorable men. Whether they could honorably serve in the armies or fleets of their own nations would depend on the question whether they would be justified in utilizing for the benefit of their own nations the information they had acquired in their service abroad. This information might certainly be of such a nature that it could not honorably be imparted by them to their own governments; but, apart from this consideration, there would be nothing to prevent their returning home and placing their swords at the disposal of their own authorities.

This last complication, it will hardly be pretended, existed in the case of those officers in the army and navy who belonged to the States which had seceded;

while, as for the duty which rested upon them to account for the troops and material under their charge, or for the forts which they commanded, it is believed that no accusation of having failed to fulfil this duty has ever been made except in the single case of General Twiggs. He was, rightly or wrongly, accused of treachery, but he was the only officer, so far as we know, against whom such a charge has ever been made.

We may remind our readers, although it is hardly necessary to do so, that the view maintained in these pages is the opposite of the one which was held so generally throughout the South. In our judgment there never has been more than one nation in this country, and the United States has been that nation. But however true this may be, we must, when we are considering the conduct of individuals, look at the questions decided by them from the standpoint from which they viewed them ; in no other way can we determine whether they did or did not adhere to the standards of duty which they accepted—that is, whether they did right or did wrong.





CHAPTER VIII.

THE MILITARY SITUATION.

PRESIDENT LINCOLN, in the same proclamation in which he had called for 75,000 men to put down the insurrection, had also called an extra session of Congress for the 4th of July. He had also, on the 3d of May, very wisely, without waiting for the meeting of Congress, called for three years' volunteers to the number of 42,034 men, for 22,714 men for the regular army, and for 18,000 men for the navy. These troops, when furnished, taken together with the 75,000 called out on the 15th of April, would make a total of 157,748 added to the existing naval and military establishments, and they would raise the available army to 156,861 men and the navy to 25,600 men, certainly a very respectable force. In his message to Congress, on July 4th, the President recommended that this number be increased to 400,000 men. In these acts and recommendations Mr. Lincoln showed a comprehension of the magnitude of the task before him which was hardly to be expected, considering that this was the first time in his life that he had had to deal with any military question.¹

¹ It should, however, be remembered that, in May, the Governors of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois urged the President to call out 300,000 men.
4 N. & H., 304, 305.

Unfortunately, however, the President showed but little judgment in his appointments to high command in the army. The senior officers in the regular army were men too far advanced in life to be of great service in the field. It was, therefore, not only necessary to relieve them from active duty, but it was possible to fill their places by promoting the most capable and promising of the younger officers. This, to a certain extent, was done, it is true; but along with these appointments were made many others from civil life, several of which were to positions of very high grade, and to these officers important commands were generally assigned. Thus, in the East, Butler, who had commanded the Massachusetts militia which had gone to Washington, and Banks, who had been Governor of that State, and also Speaker of the National House of Representatives,—both men without any military training or experience whatever,—were made major-generals of volunteers; while in the West, Frémont, who had unsuccessfully contended for the Presidency with Buchanan in 1856, and who had achieved some distinction as an explorer in the far Northwest, was made a major-general in the regular army, and appointed to the chief command in Missouri, where he superseded the brave and capable Lyon, to whose courage and skill the preservation of that State to the Union was largely due. All these appointments were wholly unnecessary; that of Frémont, though demanded on the score of his past political prominence, should never have been made for that reason; a commission of a much lower grade in the regular service, or that of brigadier-general of volunteers, would

have satisfied all reasonable claims ; while, as respects the other two appointees, Butler and Banks, there never was any reasonable ground for supposing that they could, destitute as they were of special training and military experience, perform the responsible and difficult duties belonging to the high rank conferred upon them. Many other appointments of a similar character were made ; but the mention of these three will suffice to show how, at the beginning of the war, the National cause suffered from the folly of entrusting to inexperienced hands the military commands on the intelligent management of which everything depended. There was abundant room in the large volunteer establishment then being organized for any man of enterprise and daring, who thought that he had a vocation for a military career ; there was no sort of need of giving to any untried civilian a rank so high that of itself it constituted a constant temptation to entrust him with an important command.

The work of organizing into armies the raw levies which the Northern States sent in such abundance to the front fell naturally, and indeed inevitably, upon the officers of the regular army, and of well-educated, competent, and experienced officers there was no lack. Had they all been set to work at once under energetic and capable direction to perform the multifarious but indispensable tasks requisite to transform the volunteers and militia into a fairly well organized soldiery, a great deal might have been accomplished by the first of July. Desirous, however, as the administration undoubtedly was to push on the work of raising an efficient army, there

was a lack of system in its efforts, and much time and labor were thrown away. Not only were the President and the members of the cabinet unfamiliar with matters of military organization, but the man on whom they and everybody else naturally relied, the famous General Winfield Scott, was now too old and too firmly fixed in his ideas to render to the country the services which he earnestly desired to render. Even for him, with the experience of fifty years of active service, embracing as it did two wars, in each of which he had played a conspicuous part, the crisis presented features entirely novel. He had had to do in his military career mainly with regular troops, and with small bodies only of these. He had never commanded more than twelve or fifteen thousand men in his life. He had, it is true, commanded volunteers, and he had done with them as well as he could. But he had relied on his regulars. Now, however, it was plain to every one that the volunteers must constitute the main dependence of the country. The regular army was too small to count for much—that is, as a body of troops. The vital question at this time was how to transform the volunteers into a disciplined and formidable army; and this was, not only for President Lincoln and his advisers, but also for the veteran lieutenant-general himself, a new and untried question, and one of which, as we have said, he, unfortunately, was not able to take a vigorous hold.

For instance, the militia and volunteer regiments¹

¹ The militia regiments were those which, forming a part of the militia forces of the different States, had been furnished to the Government in re-

ought immediately on their arrival at the front to have been brigaded—four or five regiments constituting one brigade,—and some competent regular army officer assigned to the command of each brigade. In this way some, at any rate, of the fundamental and indispensable ideas and habits of military life would have been acquired, and speedily acquired. But, owing mainly, we suspect, to the inertia of General Scott, this was not done, and McDowell's urgent request made on June 4th, that "his new troops" should "be organized into field brigades under active and experienced colonels in the army, while their regiments are being recruited,"¹ remained unheeded until a forward movement was in contemplation. In everything, in fact, the lack of a competent direction was manifest. There was extraordinary delay in furnishing horses for batteries, wagons for trains, ammunition, stores of all kinds. The generous devotion of the people, it is true, supplied many deficiencies, but it was painful to see the meagre results which, even with the aid of this devotion, were reached. The resources of the North were so enormous and the patriotism of the people was so unhesitating, that it cannot be doubted that the first three months of the war might have been far more usefully employed, at any rate in the Eastern States.

On the Confederate side there was also a great

sponse to the President's call for 75,000 men. The volunteer regiments were those which were enlisted for three years or the war in the service of the United States in response to the proclamation of May 3d.

¹ 2 W. R., 664; see also *ib.*, 719, 726. Cf. McDowell's testimony before the Committee on the Conduct of the War; 2, C. W., 37.

deal to be desired in the way of performance, but the smallness of the results attained was attributable mainly to other causes than those which operated in the North. The South had little money, few arsenals, a very limited supply of equipments, stores, or ammunition. Moreover the President of the Confederate States had a very inadequate notion of the magnitude of the task before him. His orders for the purchase of arms and ammunition abroad were far from being commensurate with the needs of the situation.¹ Even if it be admitted that he accomplished all that was possible with the scanty resources at his disposal, a proposition which has been widely contested, he certainly did hardly anything to increase those resources. This, at any rate, must be conceded.

Mr. Davis's appointments to the high grades in the Confederate army were, as might have been expected, judiciously made; and, although there were many civilians appointed to the rank of brigadier-general, all the chief commands were reserved for officers who had served in the old army. The Confederate Government had also the wisdom to make use of the entire machinery which a complete organization of an army so admirably affords; there were officers of the full rank of general to command their armies,—there were lieutenant-generals to command their army-corps,—major-generals to command their divisions, and brigadier-generals to command their brigades. In their service, therefore, there was rarely any need of ever assigning an officer to duty above

¹ I B. & L., 222.

that properly pertaining to his nominal rank, and, what was more important than this, the manifest propriety of basing distinctions of rank upon extent of command was recognized as it always ought to be. In the Union army, on the other hand, major-generals commanded armies, army-corps, or divisions, indifferently, according to circumstances, to the manifest loss of *esprit de corps* and the general detriment of the service. General Scott, even, was merely a lieutenant-general, and that only by brevet, and it was not until the autumn of 1863 that the full grade of lieutenant-general was even created. That of general was not created until 1866. Probably an ignorant and more or less unworthy jealousy of distinctions of rank was at the bottom of this disposition of the Northern people to deny to the leaders of their armies the distinctions properly pertaining to the commands with which they were entrusted. It is to be noted here that a more enlightened policy was followed, and followed too to the general satisfaction of the public, in regard to the navy, in which branch of the service the grade of Captain was in 1861 the highest known to the law. The full rank-list was revived by degrees; the title of Flag-Officer was created in 1861; those of Commodore and Rear Admiral in 1862; that of Vice Admiral in 1864; that of Admiral later.

Let us now look at the military situation.

The attempt to carry the State of Missouri out of the Union was vigorously resisted by the loyal party in that State, led by Frank P. Blair, Thomas T. Gantt, and other resolute men, supported by the

small regular force in that region under the brave and energetic Captain Nathaniel Lyon; and actual hostilities on quite a large scale were carried on during the months of May and June, 1861. The battle of Boonville, on the 17th of June, decided the fate of Missouri in favor of the Union cause.

Kentucky, as we have seen, was at this time endeavoring to pursue a neutral policy, and her territory was occupied solely by her own militia.

There remained, therefore, only Virginia as a possible theatre of war; and Virginia was divided by the Alleghany Mountains into two communities, differing in essential respects from each other. We have referred to this fact before.¹ On the secession of Virginia in May, Governor Letcher and the State authorities had exerted themselves to arouse the secession spirit in the western counties, but without effect. Their population had far more affinity with their neighbors on the Northern side of the Ohio River than with the slave-holding people of central and southeastern Virginia on the other side of the mountains. A conflict was, therefore, certain to occur, sooner or later, and it was not difficult to foresee that its result would be favorable to the Union cause, it being obviously much easier for the North than for the South to maintain a decisive superiority in military force in the region lying northwest of the Alleghanies.

Early in June, the small body of troops which had been sent from Richmond to overawe the country and to burn the bridges on the Baltimore and Ohio

¹ *Ante*, p. 3, n. ; p. 11.

Railroad, one of the most important avenues of communication between Washington and the West, had been dispersed and routed; and a convention composed of delegates from all the loyal counties of the State met at Wheeling on the 11th, and, repudiating the doings of the convention which had at Richmond in the previous month declared the State out of the Union, undertook to reorganize the State Government. The ultimate result of this movement was the establishment of the new State of West Virginia, now a member of the Union.

The Richmond Government, however, made one more trial to preserve its authority, and several thousand troops, under Generals Wise and Garnett were sent to occupy the country. But the Union forces, under General McClellan, afterwards so well known as the commander of the Army of the Potomac, marched promptly against them, and in a brief and brilliant campaign they were totally defeated at Rich Mountain and Carrick's Ford on the 11th and 13th of July, with great loss in killed, wounded, and prisoners. This settled forever the fate of West Virginia. It is true that the Confederates in the ensuing autumn made a tolerably vigorous effort to retain their hold in the Kanawha Valley, but they were wholly unsuccessful; and, in November, they were compelled to evacuate the entire region, and to resign all hopes of ever bringing West Virginia into line with the Southern Confederacy.

It only remains for us to consider the situation in eastern Virginia and in the Shenandoah Valley,

where the hostile armies confronted each other. But an examination of their relative positions can be more appropriately given in connection with a narrative of their operations, to which we will devote the next chapter.





CHAPTER IX.

THE BATTLE OF BULL RUN.

VIRGINIA was necessarily the theatre of war in the East. Richmond, the capital of the new Confederacy, was situated less than a hundred miles south of Washington, and only twenty miles west of the meridian of Washington. But while Richmond was assuredly not far from the frontier of the Confederacy, Washington was actually on the boundary line; batteries on Arlington Heights could render the Capitol and the White House untenable. Each capital, in fact, might well seem to be the prize of a bold and resolute attack. The consequences of the capture of either were certain to be momentous, and might conceivably prove to be decisive of the whole struggle. The chief care of the opposing governments, so far as operations in Virginia were concerned, was therefore, naturally, to protect their respective capitals from capture, and this might be effected by either army threatening the rival capital, as well as by its taking up a covering position in front of its own. We find, in fact, three objects to have been aimed at with more or less constancy throughout the war by each of the opposing armies in Virginia; first, the protection of the capital of its own coun-



try ; second, the capture of the enemy's capital,—and, lastly, the defeat of the opposing army. These objects, moreover, as we shall see, could not always be pursued at the same time ; and we shall have occasion hereafter to note the effect upon the strategy of the rival commanders produced by the attempt to compass these not always compatible ends in the same campaign.

The Federal capital, as we have above remarked, was situated on the very boundary line between the territories of the two belligerents. The approaches to it were, moreover, blocked by no natural obstacles whatever. Richmond, on the contrary, was defended on the north and east by the Chickahominy, an unfordable river, the course of which lay between dangerous and extensive marshes. No army could approach the city from the west without exposing its communications. The vulnerable side of Richmond was the south ; but to operate from that direction required the aid of a fleet such as, at the outbreak of the war, the Federal Government did not possess.

The geographical features of the theatre of war in the east were in truth exceedingly favorable for the Confederates. Not only could the immediate neighborhood of Washington be reached without difficulty, but it was also possible to reach the fertile and populous regions of Maryland and Pennsylvania lying to the northwest of the capital, without encountering any natural obstacle except the river Potomac. And a movement in this direction could be made entirely out of the range of the operations of any Federal army in Virginia whose task it was

to cover Washington, simply by marching down the Shenandoah Valley. This famous avenue for the invasion of the North, as it afterwards became, ran in a northeasterly direction from about the centre of the State until the Potomac was reached at and to the northwestward of Harper's Ferry; and, throughout all this distance, it was perfectly possible, by guarding the mountain passes on its easterly side, to prevent interference by any Federal force operating near Washington with the progress of a Confederate army down the Valley. The region was rich and prosperous and possessed good turnpikes. The inhabitants were thorough secessionists. No Federal commander could afford to neglect a Confederate army in the Valley of Virginia, and press on towards Richmond, for, if the Confederate general should cross the Potomac and invade Maryland, the railroads leading to the capital would be liable to seizure, and the presence of the enemy in the midst of this fertile and important region would inevitably give rise to such apprehension and alarm that the Federal Government would be compelled to recall its army to drive the invaders from the territory of the North.

But the Shenandoah Valley offered to the Federals no such facilities for the invasion of Virginia. It is true that on its westerly side it was flanked by the Union territory of Kanawha or West Virginia, and that the passes through the eastern mountains could easily be guarded. But an advance up the Valley was of no practical utility to the Northern invader, except in so far as it was worth while to occupy a fertile region from which the South could draw supplies of

provisions. Moreover, unless the advance was made in great force, it was a dangerous thing to make it, for the Valley was divided longitudinally by the Massanutten Mountain and the forks of the Shenandoah River, and afforded to an able general infinite opportunities of skilful manœuvring, as was afterwards abundantly demonstrated by Stonewall Jackson. Furthermore, to debouch from the Valley and occupy Gordonsville, the key to the railroad system of central Virginia, was no easy matter, and involved necessarily a dangerous exposure of the communications of the force thus emerging through the upper gaps into central Virginia. On the whole, then, the Shenandoah Valley offered no special advantages as a route for the Northern invader to pursue.

At the same time, it was obviously undesirable that the Valley should be occupied permanently by the Federal forces, and the Confederate Government entrusted its defence to one of their ablest officers, General Joseph E. Johnston, and instructed him to hold Harper's Ferry, where the Shenandoah River falls into the Potomac. Johnston, however, was not long in discovering that Harper's Ferry was an untenable position, and soon evacuated the post, which was at once occupied by General Patterson, to whom General Scott had entrusted the defence of this part of the frontier. Johnston fixed his headquarters at Winchester, and observed the river from Harper's Ferry to Martinsburg. His force, which was called the Army of the Shenandoah, numbered at the beginning of July about 11,000 men, with 20 guns.¹

¹ Johnston's Narrative, 31, 33; 2 W. R., 187, 487.

Patterson's force was then somewhat larger, but consisted in the main of three months' troops, whose term of service had nearly expired.¹

To oppose a direct advance upon Richmond, and at the same time to menace Washington, the Confederate authorities entrusted to General Beauregard, to whose already excellent reputation the capture of Fort Sumter had added much renown, their principal army, known at that time as the Army of the Potomac,² which on the 21st of July comprised about 22,000 men, with 29 guns.³ This force was stationed on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, and protected Manassas Junction on that road, where a railway, coming from Front Royal in the Shenandoah Valley, connected with the main line to Richmond. So long as this point was held, troops could easily and speedily be transferred from the Valley to the vicinity of Washington, and *vice versa*. It was, therefore, clearly of great importance to hold this position, if the two Confederate armies were to be united, either for an advance on Washington or to resist an advance from Washington. Beauregard's front was covered by the stream of Bull Run, which, although fordable in many places, yet constituted a considerable obstacle to an attacking force.

Although it was from the first plain to every military man in Washington that the city was exposed to the most imminent peril so long as Arlington

¹ 2 W. R., 187.

² These two armies were subsequently consolidated under the name of the Army of Northern Virginia. The Federal Army in Virginia then assumed the name of the Army of the Potomac.

³ 2 W. R., 487.

Heights remained unoccupied by Federal troops, it was not until May 24th that the Government was able to spare a sufficient force to take possession of that commanding position. Alexandria was occupied at the same time.¹ No opposition was encountered at either place. Both sides were, it must be remembered, unprepared for war, and (it may well be believed) neither side was anxious to precipitate hostilities. The erection by the Confederates of batteries on Arlington Heights would have involved an immediate conflict for the possession of Washington, which General Lee, who, at that time, directed military operations in Virginia, was not ready to begin. But, while it was optional with the Confederates to refrain from occupying the heights which dominated the Federal capital, it was a matter of vital necessity for their antagonists to hold and fortify them. The security of Washington was by universal admission of the first importance; no one denied that the loss of the capital would most seriously compromise the Federal cause.

Washington, however, having been rendered safe from direct attack, and troops having arrived from the North in considerable numbers, a not unnatural desire sprang up in the public mind to try conclusions with the army at Manassas. It was urged against such a course that the three months' troops, who constituted by far the greater part of the available force, were nearing the end of the term of their service, and therefore could hardly be depended on

¹ General McDowell's plan was to go on to Manassas at once. I C. W., 129. Why it was not carried out does not appear.

to show the zeal and tenacity of the three years volunteers. General Scott was decidedly of opinion that all had been accomplished by these militia regiments that could reasonably be expected of them, and that it would be far wiser to defer making any movement in advance until it could be made with troops enlisted for the war. But the Northern public, as the violent language of the newspaper press clearly showed, was determined not to lose the services of the three months' men before proving how much they could do; and as a much exaggerated notion as to the probable results of a victory over Beauregard's army was very generally entertained, the administration was finally induced to overrule the judgment of the lieutenant-general, and to order him to make the necessary arrangements for an advance.

General Scott accordingly called upon General McDowell, to whom had been given the command of the troops on the Virginia side of the Potomac, for a plan of operations; and on June 24th McDowell submitted one.¹ In it he urges that he may be allowed to put his regiments into brigades. This fact, of itself, shows the very rudimentary state of the Union army. This request was complied with, and the army was organized into five divisions, comprising in all thirteen brigades.² McDowell had with him 49 guns.³ His total force is given at 35,732

¹ 2 W. R., 719.

² 2 W. R., 314. Two of these, however, do not seem to have had brigade commanders.

³ 1 B. & L., 175.

men,¹ but, of these, Runyon's division, consisting of 5,752 men, was required to guard the roads in the rear of the army.² McDowell thus disposed of about 30,000 men for the actual conflict of arms. This gave him a superiority on the field of battle of some 8,000 men over Beauregard's army.

But it was obviously impossible to consider an advance upon Manassas without taking account of the two armies which confronted each other in the Shenandoah Valley. The possibility of Johnston's joining his force, or a great part of it, to that of Beauregard was clearly recognized by the Federal commander-in-chief, General Scott. It was seen that either Johnston must be detained in the Valley by Patterson, or Patterson must unite his army to that of McDowell; it was never supposed that McDowell alone could defeat Beauregard and Johnston together.

The operation on which the Federal authorities had decided was, therefore, without controversy, a somewhat complicated one, no matter how approached; and in the beginnings of wars, and especially when troops are raw and generals inexperienced, it is a tempting of fortune for the party which has the superiority in physical force to subject the issue of arms to the accidents which invariably happen in all co-operative movements; it is far wiser to eliminate by simplicity of plan the chances of mistake or misunderstanding. In the case before

¹ 2 W. R., 309. Apparently the "aggregate" of the 4th brigade of the 1st division is not included in this figure.

² *Ib.*, 318.

us, accordingly, it would seem that it would have been much safer to have brought the bulk of Patterson's army to Washington, as soon as the forward movement was entered upon, than to have relied for the success of McDowell's unassisted column upon Patterson's carrying out any general instructions to detain Johnston in the Shenandoah Valley. This last, however, was the course taken by General Scott.

It is not worth while for us to recount in any detail the vexatious story of the experience of General Patterson in his well-meant efforts to fulfil the expectations of his chief. Although not an educated soldier, Patterson was a veteran of the war with England in 1812 and of the Mexican war, and he undoubtedly knew something about the management of troops in the field. But he was nearly seventy years of age; he was burdened by his responsibilities. His force at first was, of course, small, and his needs were supplied only by degrees. At one time, towards the end of June, when he was congratulating himself that he was now ready at last to take the offensive in good earnest, he was ordered to send his best troops and batteries to Washington. He was a victim of the usual tendency to exaggerate his antagonist's strength; and, towards the end of the campaign, his intention of boldly going forward and attacking the hostile army faded gradually away before the picture which his apprehensions conjured up of the bloody repulse of his brave volunteers in an unsuccessful attempt to storm the formidable entrenchments of Winchester. General Scott's orders to him,

moreover, always left a great deal to his judgment; he was never positively ordered to fight. He ended by retiring to Charlestown, some eighteen miles from Winchester, and leaving Johnston absolutely free to proceed by rail or otherwise to the assistance of his brothers-in-arms on the plains of Manassas. Patterson was really more to be pitied than blamed; still he deserved censure for not engaging Johnston as soon as he knew that McDowell was advancing. Of this fact he was informed early in July; and he ought then either to have placed himself where Johnston could not have gone to Manassas without attacking him, or to have vigorously attacked Johnston himself.

But there is no good reason why General Scott should not have given Patterson specific instructions. Patterson would beyond a question have obeyed a direct order; and if Scott expected that Patterson would fight Johnston, as he says he did,—that is, if Scott thought that it was necessary to the success of McDowell's movement that Patterson should engage Johnston,—he should have given him orders to that effect, and he cannot be exonerated from blame for not having done so. He undoubtedly felt the difficulty of undertaking to exercise direct control over the movements of troops so far removed from Washington as were those under the command of Patterson. But if Patterson's movements were, as Scott unquestionably considered them, an essential part of the scheme,—if it was necessary to the success of McDowell's forward movement that Johnston should be attacked, and so detained in the Valley,—

Scott, when he consented to the advance of McDowell's army, should certainly have taken the responsibility of giving a positive order to Patterson to attack Johnston.

Difficulties of a somewhat similar character embarrassed the commanders of the two Confederate armies. The new government established itself in Richmond in the latter part of May, and President Davis, either in person or through Cooper, the Adjutant-General of the army, assumed very soon the direction of military affairs. But Mr. Davis, although he had been educated at West Point and had seen service in the Mexican war, was not by profession a soldier, nor did he show himself the possessor of military ability to any noticeable extent. Moreover, he had his hands full of his new duties as President of the Confederacy. The two Generals,—Johnston and Beauregard,—were, in consequence, left very much to themselves. On June 12, we find Beauregard writing to the President,¹ setting forth his views of the military situation, and entreating “that a concerted plan be adopted at once by the Government for its different columns,” as otherwise they were liable to “be assailed in detail by superior forces and . . . cut off or destroyed entirely.” Mr. Davis's reply² was in general terms. On June 21st, Johnston thus writes to Beauregard:³ “In the absence of a common superior, I am anxious to correspond with you; to be informed of your needs,—that I may help you when the state of things in my

¹ Beauregard's *Manassas*, 149.

² 2 W. R., 922.

³ Beauregard's *Manassas*, 145.

front will permit me to do so." On July 13th, Beauregard, writing to Johnston, after sketching out a plan of offensive operations, says:¹ "Oh, that we had but one good head to conduct all our operations! We are laboring, unfortunately, under the disadvantage of having about seven armies in the field, under as many independent commanders, which is contrary to the first principles of the art of war."²

Both of these officers were able men, and, recognizing fully the superiority of the North in resources, they saw the possibility that each of them might be opposed by a superior Federal force. Hence they were anxious that a plan for combining their forces should be adopted, so that, together, they might be more than a match for the Federal army which they might select to strike. Beauregard was more enterprising than Johnston,—his mind was more fertile in suggestions,—he was continually urging the Government to adopt an aggressive policy. Thus on June 12th, in the letter cited above,³ he writes to Mr. Davis that, if Johnston were "to concentrate suddenly his forces" with his (Beauregard's), they might retake Arlington Heights and Alexandria. Mr. Davis, however, did not consider this suggestion practicable.⁴ On June 21st Major Whiting, of Johnston's staff, writes to Beauregard, by Johnston's direction, that in

¹ Beauregard's *Manassas*, 150.

² It is interesting to contrast this state of things with that which existed in the autumn of 1862, when General Lee with Longstreet's corps was on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad and Jackson with his own corps was in the Shenandoah Valley, but under Lee's orders. See 23 W. R., 696, 704, 705, 710, etc.

³ Beauregard's *Manassas*, 148.

⁴ 2 W. R., 922.

the event of a move upon Beauregard's army, Johnston may be able to throw from five to six thousand men on the enemy's flank. As time progressed, each of the Confederate generals became convinced that he was to be attacked. On the 9th of July¹ Beauregard writes to the President that the enemy "will soon attack with very superior numbers," and that "no time should be lost in reinforcing" him "with at least 10,000 men." On the same day, Johnston² writes to General Cooper that Patterson has been largely reinforced, plainly with the object of advancing on Winchester; and he closes by suggesting that Beauregard should furnish him with five or six thousand men for a few days.

Beauregard, however, had, through his spies in Washington, definite information of the intention of the Federal Government to attack him. On July 13th he wrote³ to Johnston, urging upon his consideration the practicability and advantage of uniting the mass of his troops with the army at Manassas, and insisting that, together, they could destroy McDowell's army, and then move upon Patterson. The same evening, towards midnight,⁴ Beauregard explained his plan to Colonel Chesnut of his staff, and despatched him at once to Richmond to lay these suggestions before the President. Mr. Davis, and General Lee, who seems to have then been acting as his military adviser,⁵ thought the proposed movement of Johnston's force to join Beauregard premature, inasmuch

¹ 2 W. R., 969.

² *Ib.*, 969, 970.

⁴ 2 W. R., 506, 509.

³ Beauregard's *Manassas*, 150.

⁵ It is not clear in what capacity General Lee acted at this period.

as McDowell had not yet left the immediate neighborhood of the capital, and might not do so if he saw himself likely to encounter superior forces. Hence, the opportunity of overwhelming him in the open field might not be presented. As for attacking him behind the fortifications of Washington, that was not to be thought of for a moment.

On the 16th, however, McDowell began his movement. On the 17th, Beauregard telegraphed the fact to Richmond.¹ The same day Johnston was ordered to join all his effective forces to those of Beauregard,² and General Holmes, who commanded a small force at Aquia Creek, was sent to Beauregard with the bulk of his command.³ Of these orders Beauregard was duly informed, but he sent word to Richmond on the 17th that he was afraid that Johnston would be too late, as he expected to be attacked the next day,⁴ and he certainly would have been attacked the next day had not unforeseen circumstances delayed the advance of McDowell's army. But McDowell was not able to make his attack until the 21st, and in the meantime, the troops of Holmes and Johnston had joined those of Beauregard, raising the total force of the Confederates on the morning of that day to 29,000 men and 55 guns.⁵ None of them, however, arrived before the evening of the 19th, and some of Johnston's brigades came up only just in time to take part in the battle. Undoubtedly it would have been

¹ 2 W. R., 485.

² *Ib.*, 478.

³ 2 W. R., 980.

⁴ *Ib.*, 950.

⁵ Beauregard's Report; 2, W. R., 487. Later in the day, further reinforcements to the number of nearly 3000 arrived. Cf. 1, B. & L., 195.

safer for the Confederates to have united their armies some days at least before they did so.

McDowell, as we have said, began his movement on July 16th. He encountered no force of the enemy until he arrived in the neighborhood of Bull Run on the 17th. On the 18th, Tyler, who commanded one of the divisions, having been ordered to make a reconnoissance of the lower fords of the stream, foolishly and without any object, exposed his command, or a part of it, to a rather heavy fire. Some of his troops fell into confusion, and all were promptly withdrawn; the affair was a discreditable one, and unquestionably had a bad influence on the army, while it also did something to inspirit the Confederates.

The army of General Beauregard lay behind the rather tortuous stream of Bull Run, which runs, from the stone bridge where it is crossed by the Warrenton turnpike, in a direction generally south-east until it falls into the Occoquan. Its banks were high and often wooded, and its rather frequent fords were carefully guarded, so that it presented a formidable obstacle for such raw troops as those which constituted the United States forces. It is true that the Confederate troops were equally raw; but they were standing on the defensive, and it has often happened that green troops have held positions and sustained attacks with remarkable firmness. The superiority of trained soldiers is, of course, always marked; but it is never so clearly marked as when demand is made upon the men for endurance of fatigue, of heat, of cold, of hunger, of muddy roads and bad weather, of discouraging reports, of adverse

circumstances, of partial rebuffs and defeats. In mere physical courage the recruit or militiaman is generally not deficient; he can fight,—he proposes to fight,—and he can usually be relied on to fight; but, in the first place, he must be brought upon the field in good order and condition; and secondly, he must have no cause to distrust the skill of his commanders, or the possibility of achieving success. Subject him to the ordinary vicissitudes of warfare, and his confidence departs, his courage leaves him, he becomes deaf to the calls of his officers, and utterly untrustworthy. In handling green, undisciplined troops, therefore, it is wiser, as a rule, to remain on the defensive.¹

Similar considerations apply to the subject of carrying out complicated operations with untried officers. Inexperienced division and brigade commanders can rarely be made to work together, even under the most skilful generals.

The task, therefore, which lay before General McDowell was a much more difficult one than that which he was forcing upon his adversary. McDowell was obliged either to carry the line of Bull Run by main force, or to concert a turning-movement and carry his army or a part of it beyond the stream, where he could attack his enemy in the open field. Either of these courses had great difficulties. He chose the latter. He had at first intended to turn his adversary's right, and, passing to the south of the Junction, to reach some point on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad to the southwest of Manassas.

¹ Cf., Johnston's *Narrative*, 50.

But his stay at Centreville on the 19th and 20th, occasioned by the impossibility of concentrating sooner his loosely organized force of raw troops, had enabled him to ascertain the intricate and wooded character of the country which he would have to traverse if he attempted this movement to the south. He therefore decided to turn Beauregard's left, by making a *détour* to the northwest with his right wing, which, crossing Bull Run at the ford near Sudley Springs, where he was well assured no opposition would be encountered, would march down the right bank of the stream until it should pass behind the stone bridge on the Warrenton turnpike, when it could be joined by the troops from the left bank, and the enemy's line then be assailed in flank by the united Federal forces.

Many things favored this scheme. The fact that the Confederates were obliged to station the bulk of their forces so as to cover Manassas Junction, made it practically certain that Bull Run could be crossed near Sudley Springs without opposition, and rendered it also altogether probable that the Federal turning-movement would escape observation until it was too late for Beauregard to bring up a sufficient force from the lower fords of the river to oppose it successfully. The junction of the Federal centre to the right wing after the bridge should be reached, would be certain, if properly effected, to produce an inspiring effect on the United States forces. The Confederate left wing would be of itself too weak to offer any serious resistance to the united Federal forces, while the difficulty of bringing up troops from

the neighborhood of the Junction in season to prevent the defeat of at least that portion of the Confederate army was manifest from an inspection of the map.

There were, however, serious objections to the plan. One was the fatigue to which the troops of the Federal right would be subjected in the march of ten or twelve miles which they would have to make before they could reach the point where they would encounter the enemy. As these troops constituted five out of the eight brigades with which McDowell proposed to fight his battle, their physical condition at the moment of contact with the enemy, was obviously a matter of very great importance. Then there was necessarily some question as to the effective and timely co-operation with the right wing of the centre, that is, of the three brigades of Tyler's division which were to cross the stream so soon as the turning column should uncover the stone bridge on the Warrenton pike. Lastly, as the projected movement could not be prudently undertaken unless three brigades, at least, should be left at Centreville, and between that place and Bull Run, to guard against any movement of Beauregard's on the communications of the Federal army,¹ McDowell's available force for the actual encounter of arms on the west side of the stream could not be further augmented.

On the night of Saturday, July 20th, the army of General McDowell was encamped in the neighborhood of Centreville on the Warrenton turnpike. Of

¹ McDowell's testimony ; 2 C. W., 44.

the four divisions¹ of which it was composed, that of Tyler was farthest in advance; the two leading brigades were about one mile west of Centreville. One brigade, however, was nearly a mile east of Centreville. The divisions of Hunter and Heintzelman were encamped on different roads, and each was a mile and a half east of Centreville. The division of Miles, comprising 6200 men, with three batteries, was to remain in the immediate vicinity of Centreville, to guard the communications of the army. One brigade of Tyler's division, Richardson's, with two batteries, was also stationed near Blackburn's Ford,² to observe the movements of the enemy. It was temporarily attached to Miles's division.

McDowell's plan was, that the divisions of Hunter and Heintzelman, composing about 13,000 men,³ should make the turning movements by way of Sudley Ford. They were to march from their bivouacs, Hunter's division leading, until they should reach a point on the Warrenton pike where a wood-road, which would lead them to Sudley Ford, branches off on the right. That they might arrive at this wood-road without difficulty or delay, Tyler, whose troops were bivouacking between those of Hunter and Heintzelman and this point, was ordered⁴ to advance his division (with the exception of Rich-

¹ Runyon's (Fourth) division, it will be remembered, was left to garrison the forts and guard the railroad.

² McDowell's report; 2 W. R., 317; McDowell's Map in the War Records Atlas; Part I., Plate III., 1. This ford is called Mitchell's Ford by the Confederates. See map at the end of Beauregard's *Manassas*.

³ 1 B. & L., 194.

⁴ 2 W. R., 326.

ardson's brigade, which, as we have seen, was watching Blackburn's Ford), at half past two A.M., to the vicinity of the stone bridge on the Warrenton pike.

Had General McDowell taken the precaution to have the three brigades of Tyler's division which were to act together in the battle of the next day concentrated in advance of the divisions of Hunter and Heintzelman, a good deal of confusion and delay would certainly have been avoided. The brigade of Keyes of Tyler's division bivouacked nearly two miles to the eastward of the brigades of Sherman and Schenck; it had to pass through the village of Centreville to unite with them; and, in so doing, it got in the way of the divisions of Hunter and Heintzelman, which, having also bivouacked to the east of Centreville, were likewise compelled to pass through the village to execute their orders. This delay could not have occurred had Keyes bivouacked close to the other brigades of his division on the night of the 20th. The fact, too, that the divisions of Hunter and Heintzelman entered Centreville about the same moment was a further source of embarrassment and detention. From these and perhaps other causes, there was a delay of from two to three hours in the commencement of the day's operations.¹

¹ McDowell's Report; 2 W. R., 318. He says that "there was delay in the First Division getting out of its camp on the road." Tyler indeed says (p. 348) that he moved at 2.30 A.M.; but, as he adds that he arrived in front of the stone bridge,—a march of only three miles,—at 6 o'clock, it is probable that he did not move as promptly as he claims to have done. See his testimony before the Committee on the Conduct of the War; 2 C. W., 202 *et seq.*

Finally, however, the columns started. Tyler, with the brigades of Sherman and Schenck, arrived opposite the stone bridge about 6 o'clock; Keyes's brigade was stationed a short distance in rear. The division of Hunter, followed by that of Heintzelman, aggregating something over 13,000 men, left the turnpike shortly before 6 A.M.,¹ at a point about two miles and a half from Centreville, and marched over a wood-road for about six miles in a northwesterly direction until Bull Run was reached in the vicinity of Sudley Springs. Here the troops forded the river, and, after resting perhaps half an hour, recommenced their march in a southerly direction. They had marched but a little more than a mile when the enemy was encountered, posted on some heights about three quarters of a mile north of the Warrenton turnpike. This was about half past ten o'clock.²

These troops were a portion of the demi-brigade of General Evans, and they constituted the extreme left of the Confederate line. Evans, an officer of the old army, and a good soldier,³ had been stationed to guard the stone bridge on the Warrenton pike and the neighboring fords. But he soon became convinced that the enemy in his front intended nothing serious, at any rate at the moment; and, before long, he suspected that a movement to turn his left flank

¹ Porter's Report; 2 W. R., 383.

² Burnside's Report; 2 W. R., 395. Fiske's Report; *ib.*, 401. Woodbury's Report; *ib.*, 333. Some of the Confederates make the hour much earlier. Evans's Report; *ib.*, 559. Beauregard's Report; *ib.*, 489. In his *Manassas* (p. 80) he says he heard this firing about 10.30 A.M.

³ 1 B. & L., 185, n.

was in progress. He at once left his position at the bridge with the greater part of his command, and, sending to his superior officer the important news which had just reached him, marched his troops a mile or so to his left and rear, and took up a position to receive the attack of the enemy.

Although Beauregard says¹ that he expected an attack in this direction, he had made no preparations to resist one. He had, in fact, a more comprehensive and daring scheme in his mind than a mere repulse of McDowell's turning movement. He had planned to throw the bulk of his army across Bull Run by the lower fords; and he expected by moving promptly upon Centreville, to possess himself of the Federal line of retreat. He had intended that this movement should be begun by 7.30 A.M. at the latest, and his orders were actually despatched from Manassas Junction at 5.30.² But the order to General Ewell miscarried; and, as his brigade was to have been the first to cross, the different columns were kept waiting at the various fords on the right bank of the stream, until, as General Beauregard himself put it, "the enemy was about to annihilate the left flank" of the Confederate army, "and had to be met and checked there, for otherwise he would have taken" them "in flank and in rear, and all would have been lost."³

Nothing in fact could be more complete than the change in the Confederate programme effected by

¹ Report; 2 W. R., 486.

² Beauregard's *Manassas*, 68.

³ *Ibid*, Letter to Ewell; 117.

the miscarriage of the order to Ewell, and the almost simultaneous advance of Hunter's column. The two Confederate Generals—Johnston, who, having arrived the day before, commanded the army in virtue of his rank, and Beauregard, to whom Johnston wisely left the actual control of the troops—had in truth awaited for two whole hours—from half past eight till half past ten¹—on a hill in rear of Mitchell's Ford, the execution of the orders which they had issued before six o'clock to cross the river and march on Centreville. But by half past ten word came from Ewell showing that the plan had miscarried, and the clouds of dust rising above the tops of the trees far to the northward, with an occasional sound of firing, indicated that the enemy was approaching in heavy force on their left flank, and that no time was to be lost if an effectual resistance to the advance of his formidable columns was to be organized.

Johnston and Beauregard, accordingly, after hurriedly despatching orders for certain of their brigades to come up towards the Warrenton turnpike from the fords where they were stationed, "set out at a rapid gallop . . . to give such aid as" they "could to" their "troops engaged four miles off."²

The battle had begun before their arrival. Evans, who, as we have seen, had taken up a position about three quarters of a mile north of the turnpike, had, about half past ten o'clock, been attacked by the brigade of Burnside, which constituted the head of

¹ Beauregard's *Manassas*, 80.

² Johnston's *Narrative*, 48.

the Federal column. Evans held his ground for a good hour; and finally the brigade of Bee, with two regiments of Bartow's brigade, which together with that of Jackson had been despatched to the left of the line by Beauregard early in the morning,¹ joined him. For an hour or more these troops maintained their position, but the Federal brigades, as they successively came up, flanked them, and forced them back, and, after having suffered severely, they finally retreated in great confusion across the Warrenton turnpike. Bee had already selected a position on a large hill south of the turnpike known as the Henry House hill, from the name of the house standing on it. Here the troops of Bee, Bartow, and Evans found the brigade of Jackson, and it was at this juncture that the two Confederate commanders arrived, and took personal charge of their dispirited battalions.

This Henry House hill, which was the field of battle on this day, lies just south of the Warrenton turnpike. On the east it slopes down to an affluent of Bull Run and not far from it, known as Young's Branch, and on the west it is bounded by the road which runs south from Sudley Springs to Manassas. In the northeastern corner of this field and quite near the Warrenton turnpike, stood a house known as the Robinson House, and in the western part of the field, a third of a mile from the pike, but very close to the Sudley road, stood the Henry House. The Confederate officers endeavored to establish a connected line, facing, in a general way, north, or northwest;

¹ I B. & L., 205.

but this was a difficult matter to effect, at least with the beaten and disordered regiments of Bee, Bartow and Evans, which, after contending stoutly with a superior Federal force, had been completely routed. But there were no better officers than Johnston and Beauregard and their subordinates, and the fine example of Jackson's brigade, "standing," as Bee said, "like a stone wall,"¹ did much to reanimate these shaken and partially demoralized battalions. Probably no chance word was ever uttered on a field of battle which became more famous than this expression of General Bee's. The epithet—Stonewall—stuck to Jackson's brigade throughout the war, and it certainly is the name by which its first commander will always be known as one of the most brilliant and formidable of American soldiers. The line was finally established between 1 and 2 o'clock P. M.

Beauregard states that his available force at this period of the battle on the Henry House hill consisted of about 6500 infantry and artillery with 13 guns and two companies of cavalry.² Of these troops he took the immediate, personal direction, by order of General Johnston, the Commander of the army, in the same way that he would have done had they constituted a corps or a division.³ Johnston himself, having thus, as we have seen, shown him-

¹ 1 B & L., 210.

² Beauregard's Report ; 2 W. R., 493 ; 1 B & L., 211.

³ General Beauregard, in his recent work,—*The Battle of Manassas*,—has claimed that he commanded the army on this day. See also 1 B & L., 203, 226. For this contention there seems to us no foundation at all. See Beauregard's Report, 2 W. R., 486 ; also, Johnston in 1 B & L., 244 *et seq.* ; 258. See also, General Early's remarks on this subject in Davis's R & F., 380, 381.



self to his army, and assisted to establish the line, rode off to the Lewis house,¹ about a mile in the rear, to direct and hasten the bringing up of those portions of Beauregard's army which it was thought safe to withdraw from the fords near which they were stationed, so that they might take part in the contest near the Warrenton turnpike.

General McDowell, who had accompanied his right wing, and had in person directed the successful attack on the Confederates on the north of the turnpike, now prepared to follow up his advantage with vigor. It was, in truth, not due to any lack of energy and dash on his part that his troops had been so much delayed by the resistance offered by Evans, Bee and Bartow. But although the divisions of Hunter and Heintzelman were strenuously pushed forward, it took a good deal of time for the successive regiments of which they were composed to arrive, and, under fire, take position and deploy in line of battle. Colonel Hunter, who commanded the leading division, was severely wounded at the beginning of the action, and this, of course, caused some embarrassment and delay. But in the course of a couple of hours the greater part of the troops constituting the right wing arrived; and Sherman,² who commanded one of Tyler's brigades, crossed Bull Run at a ford just above the stone bridge, and took an active, and, in fact, a decisive³ part in the final attack on the Confederate position north of the turnpike.

¹ This house was known as Portici.

² Afterwards, General William T. Sherman.

³ Burnside's Report, August 3, 1861; 2 W. R., 398.

Keyes, with another of Tyler's brigades, also crossed the stream, but, under Tyler's immediate direction, after a feeble attack on the enemy near the Robinson House, "marched down Young's Branch, out of sight of the enemy, and took no further part in the engagement."¹ The brigade of Howard, of Heintzelman's division, was, at this time, 2 P.M., still in rear; Schenck's brigade of Tyler's division, was waiting until the *abatis* on the turnpike just behind the stone bridge should be removed, when it was to cross the bridge and join the rest of the army.² Burnside, for some unaccountable reason,³ had been allowed by McDowell to withdraw his brigade under the plea that his men were fatigued and needed rest and an opportunity to replenish their cartridge-boxes; and this brigade, which was a good one, took no further part in the battle.

With four brigades of infantry, therefore, those of Porter, Franklin, Willcox and Sherman, one company of regular cavalry and two batteries of regular artillery, McDowell essayed to carry the Henry House hill. He had under his immediate control probably not much more than 9000 men, making allowance for casualties and stragglers.⁴ Beauregard,

¹ 1 B. & L., 188. Fry, who was McDowell's adjutant-general on this day, says that "McDowell did not know where it [Keyes's brigade] was." See Tyler's testimony; 2 C.W., 201. See also, Warder & Catlett, 24-26.

² This, however, Schenck did not succeed in doing.

³ 1 B. & L., 187.

⁴ Fry says (1 B. & L., 194) that McDowell crossed the river with 18,572 officers and men. He had under his eye at this time four only out of the seven brigades of which this force was composed, and these had become diminished by fatigue and exposure as well as by the enemy's fire. Cf. Heintzelman's Indorsement, 2 W. R., 410.

as we have seen, was holding the hill with about 6500 men, exclusive of cavalry. The chances, therefore, were perhaps, rather in his favor, the troops on both sides being raw troops, the Federal soldiers being mostly much fatigued, and the Confederates standing on the defensive. That McDowell did not order Burnside again to the front and bring Howard and Keyes into line of battle was most certainly his fault, and very possibly caused the loss of the day; but the fact remains that he actually did not employ 10,000 men, in the beginning of this fight, to get possession of the hill.

McDowell was evidently impressed with the extreme desirability of pressing the enemy vigorously; he clearly apprehended that they might be reinforced at any moment and that it was most dangerous to give them an opportunity to rally. Hence he would not take the time necessary to reform his own troops, or to rest them, or even to see to it that all his available force was on the field. He decided that it was wiser to go forward at once with the force which he had under his eye at the moment, and without any delay to endeavor to accomplish the task, which certainly seemed to be the manifest duty of the hour, and also feasible enough, of breaking up the enemy's new line and routing their troops immediately in his front.

At this moment, McDowell's two fine regular batteries, those of Ricketts and Griffin, planted on hills situated from a quarter to a third of a mile to the north of the turnpike, swept the summit of the Henry House hill with a destructive fire. The en-

emy's infantry were falling back to the woods which skirted the hill to the east and south. Only one of their batteries was holding its position.¹ It was evidently possible for the Federal troops to push forward and seize the hill, but its eastern and southern borders were wooded, and these woods might, of course, be occupied by the enemy, in what force it was obviously impossible to determine. Still, there were no considerable bodies of them to be seen, and McDowell knew that those of their troops which had been driven from their position north of the turnpike had been very badly cut up and demoralized.

McDowell ordered a general advance. He did not undertake to co-ordinate the movements of his divisions and brigades as he doubtless would have liked to do, because he thought it very doubtful if he could succeed in such an undertaking with raw troops and inexperienced generals, and because moreover it would have taken precious time to make the attempt. He was also perfectly aware that his brigadiers,—excellent officers as they were,—would not be able to handle their new commands as they ought to be handled. For these defects of organization and this lack of experience there was, however, no present remedy. There was in truth every reason for decisive action. Any hesitation on McDowell's part was certain to damp the confidence of his men.

Knowing well, as he did, the moral support which the near presence of field artillery always gives to infantry, and especially to untried infantry, Mc-

¹ Imboden's Staunton Artillery; 1 B. & L., 234. This was just before Jackson arrived with his brigade.

Dowell ordered Major Barry, his chief-of-artillery, to send forward the batteries of Ricketts and Griffin to take position beyond and to the south of the Henry House. It seems unlikely that General McDowell should have intended his chief-of-artillery to interpret this order so as to cause these valuable batteries to be exposed to a close musketry fire which of course they could not return; but Major Barry sent the batteries forward at once, and then busied himself to find a regiment or two to support them.¹ Ricketts and Griffin, as brave and competent men as ever lived, were amazed to receive such an order, and Griffin even ventured a word or two of remonstrance; but they promptly obeyed, and went into battery near the Henry House and within musket-shot of the woods south of it.² Immediately the enemy's sharpshooters began to pick off the men and horses. The Zouave-regiment which had been assigned as a support gave way at once before a cavalry charge. The batteries were evidently in a difficult position. Their fire was necessarily directed upon the enemy's batteries and supporting infantry on the east side of the plateau, but they were continually losing men and horses by the fire of the enemy in the woods on their right. The Federal troops, however, were advancing; Colonel Heintzelman was pushing the 14th New York down the Sudley and Manassas road, to gain a position to the right and rear of the batteries; Colonels Porter and Sherman were advancing up the

¹ Barry's Report; 2 W. R., 347.

² Willcox's Report; 2 W. R., 408. Willcox calls the Henry House the Robinson House.

slope of the hill towards the front of the guns; Colonel Willcox was exerting himself to rally the Zouaves and to occupy the adjacent woods.

While this was going on, a regiment of the enemy appeared suddenly from the south and a very short distance to the east of the batteries. Griffin was satisfied at a glance that it was a hostile regiment and prepared to open upon it with canister, but Major Barry, the chief-of-artillery, assured him that it was one of our regiments sent as a support to the batteries,—and directed his fire in another direction. In a moment or two the regiment advanced and poured such a close and well directed fire into the batteries that they were rendered absolutely helpless and useless for the rest of the day. Not another shot was fired by either of them. The enemy immediately took possession of them.

Disheartening, however, as this mischance was, McDowell had no idea of giving up the fight. On the contrary, he made more than one determined effort to carry the plateau. The batteries were taken and retaken. The hill was at times covered with the Federal regiments, which in their bright and attractive militia uniforms presented an appearance never afterwards seen on a field of battle during the war. The enemy more than once were compelled to retire into the woods which bordered the plateau on the south and east, and into which the Federal troops could not afford to follow them. Here, in fact, lay the great difficulty in the way of McDowell's winning the battle. The Confederates could always fall back into the woods and reform. There was on this

field no position, the capture of which would make the Federal troops masters of the situation and ensure the rout of the enemy. McDowell could not, with the number of troops at his immediate disposal, turn his adversary's position; he had not a sufficient superiority in force. Even the reinforcement of Howard's brigade, which came up about 3 P.M., did not materially change the situation. McDowell's only chance lay in wearing his antagonists out; and this, in the condition of fatigue in which his own men were, was a very doubtful matter.

These combats for the possession of the hill after the destruction of the batteries lasted about an hour, —from half past two to about half past three. Then the Confederates received reinforcements in the shape of a brigade of Johnston's army under General Kirby Smith, and a brigade of Beauregard's army under Colonel J. A. Early. These troops, being sent at once to the extreme left of their line, outflanked McDowell's right, and the Federal army, which, though disappointed at not having repeated the success of the forenoon, and exhausted, was still claiming the victory, found itself in no condition to resist a fresh adversary. In spite of the exertions of McDowell and the regular officers under him, in spite of the efforts of the many gallant volunteer officers, who could not tolerate the idea of defeat on this their first battle-field, the great mass of the men quietly but definitively broke ranks and started on their homeward way.

The troops generally retired over the roads by which they had come. For a good part of the dis-

tance there does not seem to have been any panic. But the constant efforts of the enemy's cavalry, and the establishment by the enemy of a battery which commanded a bridge on the Warrenton pike over a little stream called Cub Run, finally produced a widespread, though not by any means universal, demoralization in those troops which had taken part in the action. The reserve division of Miles, however, and the brigade of Richardson, which had been stationed near Centreville and between that place and the lower fords, preserved their countenance admirably. Davies' brigade repelled a somewhat determined attack of the enemy from McLean's Ford during the afternoon, and the whole force constituted a steady and trustworthy rear-guard to the army after it had passed Centreville.

The Federal loss in the battle of Bull Run,—which, by the way, is called by the Confederates the battle of Manassas,—was as follows:¹

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------|
| Killed | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 460 |
| Wounded | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 1,124 |
| Missing | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 1,312 |
| Total | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 2,896 |

The Confederate loss was as follows:²

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------|
| Killed | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 387 |
| Wounded | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 1,582 |
| Missing | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 13 |
| Total | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 1,982 |

It will be observed that, of the Confederates, rather more than four times as many men were wounded as

¹ I B & L., 194.

² *Ibid.*, 195.

were killed. Applying this ratio to the Federal loss, we arrive at the figure of 1840 as the total of their wounded. This reduces the number of unwounded prisoners to 596. There can be no question that these figures are substantially correct.¹

These figures show hard fighting. It appears that of the 18,500 officers and men who crossed Bull Run with McDowell or subsequently joined him, 2300 were killed and wounded,—a loss of over 12 per cent. The Confederate loss in the battle² was not quite so large in proportion. Of the Army of the Potomac (Beauregard's), about 9700 were actively engaged,—of the Army of the Shenandoah, about 8300,—making a total of 18,000.³ Of these there fell, killed and wounded, about 1900,—somewhat over ten per cent. The officers on both sides, as a rule, showed great gallantry. McDowell, Johnston, Beauregard were in the hottest of the fight, directing and superintending their respective armies. Beauregard had a horse shot under him. The commanders of the two leading Federal divisions, Hunter and Heintzelman, were both wounded. Of the Federal brigade-commanders Willcox was wounded and taken prisoner. On the other side, Bee and Bartow were killed; Jackson and Kirby Smith wounded. The action was fought, so long as it was fought, with great spirit by both armies; and, so far as the Federal troops are concerned, it was not until the

¹ Cf. Fox's *Regimental Losses in the American Civil War*, 23 *et seq.*

² Deducting, that is, Jones' loss of 76 in the engagement near McLean's ford; 2 W. R., 539.

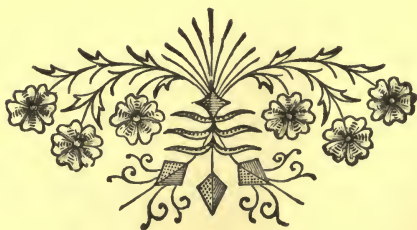
³ 1 B. & L., 195. It is remarkable that the numbers engaged on both sides should have been so nearly equal.

retreat had begun, and the martial ardor, which, so long as the actual fighting was in progress, took the place of discipline, had subsided, that the strangeness of the situation and the almost utter lack of military associations and habits allowed the men to become a prey to their heated and excited imaginations, and produced in time a veritable panic. The battalion of regular infantry under Major Sykes, it may be remarked, was wholly unaffected by the general demoralization.

McDowell endeavored to make a stand at Centreville, but he found it was useless to attempt to do so. The men could not be stopped. He had to content himself with protecting the rear with the three brigades of Blenker, Davies and Richardson. These troops were unmoved by the imaginary terrors of their unfortunate comrades; they constituted a formidable rear-guard, and prevented the victory from being followed up.

Such was the first battle of Bull Run. Its chief importance lies in its being the first of the battles of the civil war. It possesses, when viewed in this light, a sort of romantic interest. The participants in it had not had time to become soldiers; they had not learned the trade of war; they were (the regulars, of course, apart) civilians, animated,—both sides equally so,—by patriotic motives,—equally determined to fight to the best of their ability for their respective countries. The reports of the various generals on both sides abound with kindly and admiring references to the gallantry of these brave volunteers, who in the midst of these novel and terrifying

experiences showed such self-devotion. We do not find these remarks in the War Records in the ensuing years of the war. But the first Bull Run was a novel experience indeed,—not only for those engaged in it, but for the country itself, North and South. It brought the fact of war, in all its terrible, uncompromising reality, plainly before our faces. Hitherto we had talked about war,—now, it was impossible for any one to shut his eyes to it,—it was now plain that it had got to be fought out to the end, cost what it might.



NOTES TO CHAPTER IX.

1. The loss of the battle of Bull Run was undoubtedly severely felt, but there is no reason why we should hesitate to say that the North richly deserved its punishment. The military authorities were perfectly right in setting their faces against the popular demand for an advance with the three months militia, whose term of service had nearly run out, and the three years volunteers, whose military experience had scarcely begun. Nothing could have been gained, of any permanent importance, even if the engagement had turned in our favor. We were utterly unprepared to follow up any advantage.¹ On the other hand, by running, without any useful object, the chance of failure in battle, we gave the new Confederacy an opportunity to plume itself on the superior valor of its soldiers, and to show itself in a proud and conquering attitude before the nations of Europe.

2. McDowell's plan of operations has received great praise from several authorities,² but their commendations are obviously made for the purpose of

¹ "In the next few days," says McDowell in his Report,—2 W. R., 325,—"day by day, I should have lost 10,000 of the best armed, drilled, officered and disciplined troops in the army."

² Swinton, 51, 52, 58; 1 Comte de Paris, 228; Johnston's *Narrative*, 57; 1 Sherman's *Memoirs*, 181; Nicolay's *Outbreak*, 206.

exalting the merit of the strategy of the movement as compared with that of its tactics, and, as it seems to us, without having bestowed more than a superficial glance at the strategy. There was a very serious difficulty with McDowell's plan, and that was, that it directly and temptingly exposed his communications; his antagonist could threaten his base of operations,—Centreville,—without other hindrance than that offered by the troops he had left to guard it. McDowell in fact deliberately took the risk of leaving his rear guard to maintain his base of supplies and his communications with Alexandria and Washington, and cut loose from everything, for the purpose of turning the enemy's left. So far from his army covering his base, his line of battle was actually parallel with his line of communications, and his main body was further removed from his base of supplies than was the right wing of his enemy. He did not dare to call on his reserves for reinforcements. Had the battle been a drawn battle, with the chances which (as he well knew) existed, of his adversary being largely reinforced, could he have stayed on the Henry House hill? The question almost answers itself. There is no reason to suppose that McDowell himself did not fully appreciate the strategical defects of his plan; but he thought that, on the whole, he stood a better chance of success by following this course than by moving from Centreville upon the lower fords of Bull Run, and attempting to carry his adversary's position by direct attack. In this opinion he may, of course, have been right; but it seems to us by no means clear that he was right.

He expected to win a decisive tactical victory over the left wing of the enemy that afternoon; if he had done this, as was of course possible, he might have pushed on the next day; but if he had not been entirely successful, he must have found himself in a false position, and probably early the next morning, he would have retired across the stream.¹

3. General McDowell's tactics have been decried, but, as it seems to us, without good reason. General Johnston says:² "If the tactics of the Federals had been equal to their strategy, we should have been beaten. If, instead of being brought into action in detail, their troops had been formed in two lines with a proper reserve, and had assailed Bee and Jackson in that order, the two Southern brigades must have been swept from the field in a few minutes, or enveloped. General McDowell would have made such a formation, probably, had he not greatly underestimated the strength of his enemy."

General McDowell would beyond a doubt have made such a formation had he been able to do so. But in the then condition of his army,—five of his seven brigades having been on their feet for twelve hours and very much exhausted,³—and all being raw troops, the thing was not practicable. He did wisely in losing no time over such an impossible problem, and in doing his best at once to snatch the victory by a bold and unhesitating advance. There was,

¹ See the remarks of General Beauregard, 1 B. & L., 218.

² Johnston's *Narrative*, 57.

³ On the exhaustion of the men in Hunter and Heintzelman's divisions, see the Reports of Colonels Farnsworth, Howard, Dunnell, 2 W. R., 413, 418, 421, etc.

however, no reason why he should have kept Howard's brigade so long in reserve.

He should, also, have ordered Burnside to the front when he attacked the Henry House hill, and should have brought Tyler with Keyes' brigade, into line. Of the action, or rather inaction, of these officers much indeed might be said; it is perhaps sufficient to call attention to the conduct of Sherman and Stonewall Jackson in this same battle.

4. The result of the battle induced in the minds of the people of the South a very unwarranted opinion as to the superiority of their troops in fighting qualities, but the lesson really to be drawn from Bull Run is well stated in the judicious language of General Johnston. We cannot do better than to quote it here.¹

"It must not be supposed that such successful resistance by the Southern troops was due in any degree to want of prowess in their assailants. The army they fought belonged to a people who had often contended on the field on at least equal terms with the nation that had long claimed to be the most martial in Europe. The Northern army had the disadvantage, a great one to such undisciplined troops as were engaged on both sides, of being the assailants, and advancing under fire to the attack, which can be well done only by trained soldiers. They were much more liable to confusion, therefore, than the generally stationary ranks of the Confederates."

¹ Johnston's *Narrative*, 50.



CHAPTER X.

PLANS AND PREPARATIONS: THE EAST, THE ATLANTIC COAST, AND THE GULF.

DECISIVE as was the victory of Manassas, which was the name given to the field by the conquerors, it is not likely that they could have advanced on Washington with success. The Federal divisions of Runyon and Miles and the brigade of Richardson,—not to mention other troops,—were in perfectly good condition, and probably could not have been driven out of the works which commanded more or less completely the approaches to the city. In this opinion both the Confederate commanders, and also President Davis, who arrived on the field just as the United States forces had given way, and who discussed the situation that night with Johnston and Beauregard, were of one mind.¹ A more vigorous pursuit, indeed, might have been made, but it would have resulted in nothing but the capture of a few more stragglers and some abandoned equipments. Those of the Confederate troops who had done the fighting were very much exhausted and disorgan-

¹ Davis, in 1 R. & F., 360; Johnston, in 1 B. & L., 252; Beauregard, in 1 B. & L., 219. But see McClellan's Report, 5 W. R., 11.

ized;¹ the supplies of provisions and ammunition were inadequate;² and although there were a good many fresh troops, yet the army as a whole was not in a state to accomplish anything by a *coup de main*.

On the other hand, while the loss of the battle was a terrible surprise and disappointment for the Northern people, it caused no wavering in their determination to prosecute the war. The members of the Congress of the United States were subjected to perhaps as severe a strain on their courage and confidence as it is possible to imagine, for not only was the battle lost, but crowds of panic-stricken Union soldiers, in a state of utter demoralization, poured through the streets of the Capital. Nevertheless, on the very day after the battle, the House of Representatives voted for the enlistment of 500,000 volunteers. There was no mutinous talk anywhere; no one spoke of changing the form of government; no one whispered of asking the President to resign. The disaster was borne by the Government and by the people in a thoroughly manly spirit; the only permanent effects of it were to intensify the determination of the nation to suc-

¹ Johnston even says: "Our army was more disorganized by victory than that of the United States by defeat." 1 B & L., 252. Beauregard (*Manassas*, 125) repudiates this statement, and calls attention to the fact that there were some 15,000 men, who had taken no part in the battle. But this is an exaggeration. Jones' brigade, which had met with such a rough experience near McLean's Ford, certainly ought not to be counted among these. Early (1 R & F., 380) says that "on the night following the battle . . . the greater part of the troops that had been engaged in the battle were in a great state of confusion." Cf. Barnard's Report on the Defences of Washington, 10.

² Johnston, 64. Early, however, does not admit that the deficiency of provisions was a real difficulty. 1 R. & F., 301.

ceed in the war, and to make people more willing to give heed to the advice of the professional soldiers who were charged with the task of directing the military operations. This last lesson, however, we are obliged to say, was not fully learned even from the severe experience of the First Bull Run.

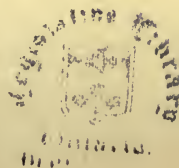
On the day after the battle the President summoned Major-General George B. McClellan to Washington. He was immediately assigned to the command, under General Scott, of all the troops in and about Washington. General McClellan's recent successful operations in West Virginia had brought him prominently to the notice of the public. His reputation in the army was of the highest. He was known as one of the most accomplished officers in the service. He had been graduated with high rank at the Military Academy. He had, as an engineer officer, made Scott's campaign from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico, had been twice brevetted for gallantry, and had attracted the favorable notice of his superiors. He had been sent abroad as one of a board of officers at the time of the Crimean War to examine and report upon the military establishments and methods then existing in Europe. The only services which he had had an opportunity to render in the present war had been brilliantly performed, and had resulted in permanent successes. He was thirty-five years of age,—powerfully built, active and energetic. His private character was irreproachable. Finally, he possessed most engaging manners; few people could resist the charm of his address; he soon became the idol of his soldiers. No man could be counted upon

more surely than McClellan to restore the feeling of security to the public mind and to re-establish the feeling of confidence among the soldiers themselves.

Almost immediately after his arrival a marked improvement in the tone of things at Washington became perceptible. It would not be true to say that no one but McClellan could have restored order in the streets of the Capital, sent the stragglers and idlers back to their regiments, and set the complicated machinery of the army again quietly and steadily in motion. But McClellan had a genius for work of this kind. The army soon felt that in him it had a master, and also a devoted and intelligent master,—in fact, a friend as well as a master. McClellan had his defects as a military man, and very serious ones; but he was a thorough soldier; everything pertaining to the camp and the field was dear to him. He knew just how everything ought to be done; he knew just what this regiment or that battery needed in order to put it in first-rate condition; he knew also what *esprit de corps* meant, and he valued and cherished it accordingly. It was not long before the volunteers (for the militia regiments had promptly hastened away on the expiration of the term of their service,) were busy from morning till night in their various military exercises, learning the routine of camp life, the manual of arms, the drill; acquiring also by degrees, some notion of discipline,—of what a regiment in active service must be, as distinguished from a militia regiment, if it is to stand the rough experiences of actual warfare. And all this was cheerfully and heartily borne, not only because

these three years' volunteers, unlike the militia who had just gone home, were for the most part men who had enlisted with the serious purpose of becoming soldiers and outfighting the soldiers on the other side, but also because it did not take long for them and for their officers to become aware that the new commander was a man who was thoroughly versed in the profession of arms, who was determined to have a thoroughly well drilled, well organized, and well equipped army, and who was superintending and watching with unwearied zeal and interest the progress made by his troops towards this most desirable consummation. McClellan had a genius for organization; he also had a genius for impressing himself on men; he was believed in and trusted by the soldiers long before he took them into battle. He won the confidence and affection of his troops by making it plain to them that he was training them to become real soldiers, and that he expected from them cordial and energetic co-operation in the great work in which they and he were equally interested, and on the successful accomplishment of which the future of the country in all probability depended.

When we add to this, that McClellan was an acknowledged authority on the structure and composition of a large army; and that, during the first three or four months of his command, every one, from the President down to the private soldier, yielded an unhesitating assent to all his suggestions, and carried out his wishes with hearty and painstaking zeal, we may readily believe that the Army of the Potomac, for such was the name now assumed by the forces



in and around Washington, was in a fair way of ultimately attaining the cherished desire of its new commander and of becoming an army in fact.

McClellan's measures were equally judicious and effective. He selected in the first place a good staff, several members of which, notably Seth Williams, Irwin, and McMahon, attained distinction in that line of the service in the course of the war. General Barnard was the chief engineer of the army; General Barry was the chief-of-artillery; General Stoneman was the chief-of-cavalry. All were competent and experienced officers. The Quartermaster, Subsistence and Ordnance Departments were also assigned to able and energetic officers, and all the machinery appertaining to a large army in the field was soon admirably arranged and under competent control. Equally judicious were the steps adopted to turn the volunteers into good soldiers. "The new levies of infantry, upon arriving in Washington, were formed into provisional brigades, and placed in camp in the suburbs of the city, for equipment, instruction and discipline. As soon as regiments were in a fit condition for transfer to the forces across the Potomac, they were assigned to the brigades serving there."¹ These brigades consisted of four regiments each; and when their organization "was well established, and the troops somewhat disciplined and instructed, divisions of three brigades each were gradually formed."² "When new batteries of artillery arrived, they also were retained in Washington

¹ McClellan's Report : 5 W. R., 12.

² *Ib.*, 13.

until their armament and equipment were completed, and their instruction sufficiently advanced to justify their being assigned to divisions. The same course was pursued in regard to cavalry."¹ In this way the interference, which would have been caused if the newly arrived troops had been at once mixed with those which had become acquainted with their duties and habituated to perform them, was prevented.

By these wise measures the volunteer regiments, which the Northern people, aroused and made more resolute than before by the defeat of Bull Run, were day by day pouring into Washington, were easily and advantageously distributed. In truth there was need, and imperative need, of system, for the fresh troops were arriving at the Capital in unheard-of numbers. Between the 4th of August and the 15th of October more than 110 regiments and thirty batteries, comprising at least 100,000 men, were added to the forces in Washington and its neighborhood,² and there appeared to be no limit to the resources and patriotism of the North. Moreover, the Northern troops were so well provided for in all respects, owing to the immense resources at the disposal of the United States Government, that there was every reason to expect in the spring of 1862 a decidedly improved condition in health and vigor, in self-confidence, and in all soldierly qualities, on the part of the soldiers. The army at Manassas, on the other hand, owing to the straitened means of the Confederate Govern-

¹ McClellan's Report : 5 W. R., 13.

² *Ib.*, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17.

ment, was barely kept comfortable in the matter of clothing and shelter, and its chief officers looked forward with undisguised apprehension to the coming winter, as certain to reduce perceptibly the health and spirits of the men, and even to relax the bands of discipline, and to render the army in every way less efficient.¹ It was easy for any one instructed in military matters to see that if the Federal authorities would only be content to defer active operations until the patriotic levies of the North should have learned "the trade of the soldier,"—should have acquired familiarity with the use of arms, habits of obedience, trust in their officers and superiors, discipline,—the Federal general would enter on the next campaign with all those chances of success which attend largely superior numbers, better arms and equipment, and a sound and thorough organization of his army.

Such in fact was the view of the situation taken by the sagacious officer who commanded the lately victorious army at Manassas Junction,² Joseph E. Johnston. In his opinion, his two corps commanders, Beauregard, whose original command was now designated as the First Corps of the Confederate army,³ and G. W. Smith, who had just been assigned to the command of the troops which Johnston brought over from the Shenandoah Valley to fight the battle of Manassas, and which now constituted the Second Corps of that army,⁴ entirely concurred.

¹ 5 W. R., 885, 886.

² Afterwards called the Army of Northern Virginia.

³ Afterwards commanded by Longstreet.

⁴ Afterwards commanded by Stonewall Jackson.

They saw that something must be done to break up this constantly increasing Federal army while it was yet in the process of formation.

The Confederate generals determined to urge their views upon the President of the Southern Confederacy. Mr. Davis responded at once to their expressed wish for a conference upon the military situation, and he reached Manassas on September 30, 1861.¹ The conference was held the next day.² The generals strongly advised Mr. Davis to reinforce the army at Manassas so that they might cross the Potomac, cut the communications of Washington with the North, and carry the war into the enemy's country. Johnston and Beauregard fixed the strength of an army adequate to these tasks at 60,000 men. Smith was content with a force of 50,000. Additional transportation and supplies of ammunition were also demanded.

The army then at Manassas numbered about 40,000 men. With the quality of the soldiers the generals appeared perfectly content. They only asked that the additional troops sent should be of an equal degree of efficiency,—“seasoned soldiers” as distinguished from “fresh volunteers.”³ But President Davis decided that he could not furnish the required reinforcement without “a total disregard of the

¹ Johnston, 75.

² A *Memorandum in extenso* of this conference was drawn up by General Smith, and signed by Johnston and Beauregard as well as by himself. This was done without the knowledge of Mr. Davis, and it afterwards created some feeling on his part; 5 W. R., 884-887; Smith's *Confederate War Papers*, 14-20. Cf. 1 R. & F., 449 *et seq.*; 1 B. & L., 254.

³ Smith, C. W. P., 17, 35.

safety of other threatened positions.”¹ The project was therefore dropped, and no further attempt was made during the ensuing autumn and winter to interfere with the uninterrupted development of the Federal army at and near Washington in organization and efficiency.

This scheme of invading the North in the autumn of 1861, although it never took shape, may well justify a few moments' consideration. It is altogether probable that the Confederate army was at that time decidedly the superior of its antagonist in many important respects. It had the prestige of victory. It had the self-confidence and audacity which the unfortunate panic, which overtook their foes after the battle of Manassas was over, could hardly fail to produce in the minds of the victors. It trusted its generals fully,—it believed in them enthusiastically. It was the only army in the country on either side that had won a considerable battle. It was the envy and pride of the Confederate soldiery. It cannot be doubted for a moment that regiments stationed at Charleston or Pensacola would have responded with the utmost alacrity to an order to join themselves to the victorious forces of Johnston and Beauregard,—would gladly have exchanged the tedium of garrison life for the excitement of an active campaign. Had President Davis adopted the recommendations of his generals, and increased the Manassas army to 60,000 men, Johnston would have entered Maryland with a force considerably larger, and vastly more fresh and vigorous, than that with which General Lee the

¹ *R. & F.*, 449.

next autumn captured Harper's Ferry and fought the battle of Antietam; in fact, his force would not have been very far short of that with which Lee, in July, 1863, assaulted Meade's lines in the protracted and obstinately contested battle of Gettysburg. And while we do not for a moment suppose that Johnston's army in 1861 was equal to either of the Confederate armies of Antietam and Gettysburg in point of efficiency, yet it would, as has just been pointed out, have possessed considerable advantages over any troops which McClellan could have opposed to it as early as October, 1861. These must have been for the most part raw and ill-disciplined, unacquainted with their brigade and division commanders, and necessarily affected unfavorably to a greater or less extent by the fact of the battle of Bull Run having been a bad defeat for the Union forces. We may fairly say therefore, that an invasion of the North, undertaken in October, 1861, held out a very fair promise of a successful result for the Confederate arms.¹

As to the nature of such a result,—its magnitude, its influence on the temper of the Northern people, its effect on the duration of the war,—it is, of course, impossible to speak. But it is clear that the decision as to adopting the course advocated by the generals should have been arrived at by contrasting its probable result with that of remaining on the defensive. This latter course was certain to give to the stronger of the two antagonists the time necessary for augmenting his army, thoroughly equipping it with

¹ See Smith, C. W. P., 32, 33.

stores, ordnance, ammunition and transportation, and raising it to a very high point of efficiency by carrying out for months a thorough system of organization and discipline. The next time the two combatants met, it was morally certain, therefore, that the Federal army would be a very formidable force, not only in numbers and equipment, but in tone and *moral*, a force which might very possibly defeat or even destroy its weaker antagonist, and which could not, humanly speaking, be itself destroyed or disintegrated by any blows which that weaker antagonist would be capable of delivering.

Taking these things into account, therefore, what could have been more important for the Southern Confederacy than to make the attempt to grapple with this Federal army before it had acquired the powers of resistance which organization and discipline were certain, if only the requisite time were granted, to confer upon it? What "threatened positions" were there, the importance of defending which could be compared for a moment with the urgency of breaking up the Federal Army of the Potomac before it had attained its full strength? But Mr. Davis on this, as on other occasions, failed to grasp the situation; of the two policies,—the offensive and the defensive,—one of which he was necessarily compelled to adopt, he chose the one which promised the fewer advantages.¹ No one can say what might not have been the effect of a severe

¹ For a very able discussion of the merits of the offensive policy for the Confederate States, not only at this juncture but throughout the war, see Beauregard's remarks in 1 B. & L., 221-223.

defeat inflicted in the fall of 1861 on a Federal army seeking to maintain or to recover the communications of Washington with the North. Following so soon after the battle of Bull Run, the moral effect of such a victory in raising the spirits and hopes of the Confederates and in lowering the confidence of the Northern public in a successful issue of the war, would have been enormous. The effect abroad, also, where every one was inclined to deprecate the war as an unjustifiable resort to force on the part of the North, and as certain to terminate in the failure of the Union armies, would have been most marked. It is not necessary to suppose that either Washington or Baltimore should have been taken; troops enough might have been collected while the Confederate generals were detained before the fortifications, to preserve these cities from capture; but if the Federal army had been badly defeated in a pitched battle, and the Confederates had been for a time successful, the result of the campaign would almost certainly have been very unfortunate for the cause of the North, even if no irreparable disaster had been sustained. Therefore we say that Mr. Davis made a serious, and probably a very serious, error, when he refused to adopt the advice of his generals, and allowed this opportunity of striking such a telling blow for the cause which he represented to pass by unimproved.

Let us return now to the northern side of the Potomac. It was hardly to be expected that the young general who had been summoned to take charge of the Federal army after the severe defeat

of Bull Run would long be content to serve under General Scott, whose age and infirmities rendered him entirely unfit to retain the control of military affairs. Whether, as has sometimes been said, General McClellan failed to treat his distinguished chief with the consideration which was his due, is not a matter of sufficient importance to engage our attention here; suffice it to say that, in October, General Scott insisted on being allowed to retire from active service. The truth is that it was practically impossible for McClellan to exercise the direct and unquestioned control which it was absolutely necessary for him to exercise, and at the same time to refer all matters of importance to the decision of the lieutenant-general. It was therefore a clear gain for the service when, on November 1, 1861, the entire responsibility was placed on McClellan's shoulders.

The plan of the new commander-in-chief for the conquest of the South differed materially from that of his predecessor. General Scott had made no secret of his disapproval of the policy of carrying on an active campaign in Virginia.¹ He had distinctly declared his preference for a campaign which should open the Mississippi.² General McClellan, also, had in May, when he was commanding on the Ohio, advocated a movement from Cincinnati or Louisville on Nashville, with a force of 80,000 men, who were, in the event of a successful battle, to march upon Pensacola, Mobile or New Orleans.³ Nothing came

¹ McDowell's testimony; 2 C. W., 37.

² *Ib.*, 37; 4 N. & H., 301, 302.

³ 4 N. & H., 299, 300.

of these plans; the available resources of the Government were not at that time sufficient for operations of such magnitude; it was in fact premature to consider such comprehensive schemes.

On the 4th of August, however, when General McClellan had fulfilled the most pressing of his duties in restoring order to the army and confidence to the public mind, he prepared, with that fondness for methodical action which was one of his most marked characteristics, at President Lincoln's request, a memorandum on the object of the war and his general plan of operations.

His statement of the object of the war is certainly as clear and correct as any that could be made.¹

"The object of the present war differs from those in which nations are usually engaged mainly in this, that the purpose of ordinary war is to conquer a peace and make a treaty on advantageous terms. In this contest it has become necessary to crush a population sufficiently numerous, intelligent and warlike to constitute a nation. We have not only to defeat their armed and organized forces in the field, but to display such an overwhelming strength as will convince all our antagonists, especially those of the governing, aristocratic class, of the utter impossibility of resistance. Our late reverses make this course imperative. Had we been successful in the recent battle (Manassas) it is possible that we might have been spared the labor and expenses of a great effort."

In other words, General McClellan said that, in his judgment, no single success, no matter how striking,

¹ McClellan's Report; 5 W. R., 6.

could bring the resistance of the Southern people to an end ; that they had made up their minds to fight to the last, and that the issue, as framed by them, must be accepted by us, and the war prosecuted with the object of conquering them completely. It will not be denied that McClellan correctly apprehended the situation.

He then goes on to speak of his plans :

“The rebels have chosen Virginia as their battle-field, and it seems proper for us to make the first great struggle there.”

Here again nothing can be sounder than the proposition of General McClellan. The shortest road to the enemy is generally the best. Let us, however, see how he goes on to develop his idea.

He next makes a number of suggestions,—most of them obviously judicious,—such as that “a strong movement be made on the Mississippi, and that the rebels be driven out of Missouri” ; that East Tennessee be occupied ; that the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad be reopened and protected ; and that West Virginia be made absolutely secure to the Union. He then proceeds :¹

“For the main army of operations I urge the following composition :

| | MEN. |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| 250 regiments of infantry,—say— . . | 225,000 |
| 100 field-batteries,—600 guns . . . | 15,000 |
| 28 regiments of cavalry . . . | 25,500 |
| 5 regiments engineer-troops . . . | 7,500 |
| <hr/> | |
| Total | 273,000 |

¹ 5 W. R., 7.

"The force must be supplied with the necessary engineer and pontoon trains, and with transportation for everything save tents. Its general line of operations should be so directed that water transportation can be availed of from point to point by means of the ocean and the rivers emptying into it. An essential feature of the plan of operations will be the employment of a strong naval force, to protect the movement of a fleet of transports intended to convey a considerable body of troops from point to point of the enemy's sea-coast, thus either creating diversions and rendering it necessary for them to detach largely from their main body in order to protect such of their cities as may be threatened, or else landing and forming establishments on their coast at any favorable places that opportunity might offer. This naval force should also co-operate with the main army in its efforts to seize the important seaboard towns of the rebels."

This movement through the Atlantic States of the Confederacy was to be the main operation of the war. From it he expected the most decisive results.

"I propose, with the force which I have requested, not only to drive the enemy out of Virginia and occupy Richmond, but to occupy Charleston, Savannah, Montgomery, Pensacola, Mobile and New Orleans; in other words, to move into the heart of the enemy's country and crush the rebellion in its very heart."¹

The last clause does not seem to us to describe

¹ 5 W. R., 8.

correctly the nature of the operation outlined above. It would seem rather, that the probable result of the employment of such an enormous Federal force on the Atlantic coast, supported adequately by a Federal fleet, would be the unopposed occupation of all the Atlantic cities, but not the destruction of the Confederate armies. If we can by the exercise of our imagination picture to ourselves this gigantic expedition, proceeding, by land and sea, from Washington, through Virginia and the Carolinas to the Gulf States, we can hardly suppose any adequate resistance being made anywhere to the occupation of the principal cities and towns near the coast. If the Northern army could march as one body, no prudent Southern general would hazard a contest with such a vastly superior force. The result would be, no doubt, that Richmond and Petersburg, Norfolk and Wilmington, Goldsboro and Newberne, Charleston and Savannah, Mobile and New Orleans would fall into Federal hands, and each of these places would be garrisoned with what would appear at the time to be an adequate force. But the armies of the Confederacy need not necessarily suffer in such a campaign; and the Southern generals might well be ready on the disappearance of the Northern armada to commence operations to recover such of their cities as they might desire to retake. This plan of General McClellan's was in truth substantially the same as that which the British pursued throughout the Revolutionary War. They captured and occupied New York, Philadelphia, Charleston and Savannah; but, with the exception of Lord Cornwallis's

persistent attempt to force General Greene to a decisive battle¹ in February and March, 1781, no serious and well sustained effort was ever made, during that protracted war, to destroy the American armies. There can be little question that a precisely opposite policy would have been far more effectual.

In the case of the late war, moreover, there was less excuse for adopting McClellan's plan; for the Southern Confederacy was not confined, as was the territory of the thirteen colonies, to the immediate vicinity of the Atlantic Ocean, and it was impossible even for General McClellan entirely to overlook the fact of the great importance of the Mississippi Valley. As to operations in this region, however, he does not speak with any definiteness in this Memorandum of August 4th, 1861. He simply says that he presumes that the force for the movement down the Mississippi will be determined by its commander and the President. But it is evident that he considers this as a subsidiary operation. It is true that at this time McClellan was not in command of all the armies, and it was certainly not incumbent on him to do more than to set forth what he thought ought to be the strength, composition and task of the army which he had been called upon to command. But it is plain enough that he considers that the movement along the Atlantic coast should be the principal operation of the war.

¹ The battle, when it was fought, on March 15, 1781, at Guilford Court-House, although a tactical success for the British, was attended by such a heavy loss of men that Lord Cornwallis was obliged to retire to Wilmington, N. C. He undoubtedly expected a complete victory, such as he had won over Gates at Camden in the preceding August.

We have analyzed this Memorandum of General McClellan's at what may seem an unnecessary length, because it furnishes an excellent illustration of his mental peculiarities. He is here shown to be a man of ideas, of great projects, of far-reaching schemes. But there is a flavor of unreality about the whole plan that stamps its author as one who lives in a world created largely by himself. His imagination is evidently full of the magnificent spectacle of this fine army of nearly 300,000 men, supported by the ships of war, moving along the Atlantic coast and the Gulf of Mexico, and receiving the keys of all the cities of the Confederacy from Richmond to New Orleans. In his enthusiasm for this ideal campaign, he loses sight of the importance of other parts of the theatre of war. Nor does he consider the time necessary to raise such a formidable force as that with which he proposes to move forward. Instead of giving to the President a carefully prepared statement of the number of men necessary to constitute an army capable of taking the field in Virginia, and of the length of time required to fit it for active service, he gives the reins to his imagination, and paints a picture of a military and naval expedition calculated rather to disturb than to instruct the mind of an intelligent civilian. McClellan's imagination was, in fact, always carrying him away from the facts before him, always inducing him to see things in distorted shapes—and sometimes, as we shall see later, impelling him to do things which he would not have done had he from the first resolutely determined never to let himself be ruled by his fancies and his prejudices.

But the grand scheme outlined in this Memorandum was not destined to be carried into effect. As the autumn advanced, it was seen that such a vast army as this project called for could not be created within any reasonable time, and that when the forces at the disposal of the Government for operations in Virginia should reach a total of 150,000 men or thereabouts, it would be wellnigh impossible to withstand the demand of the public that they should be employed.

Meantime, the situation in Washington was again becoming unsatisfactory. General McClellan had, in fact, begun to exhibit those defects of character which afterwards caused the unnecessary and serious disasters of the Peninsular campaign. The administration was becoming distrustful of him; the public was becoming uneasy. He had in August allowed the Confederates without opposition to establish their advanced posts on Munson's Hill and other places in full view of the Capital. It is true that these detachments were withdrawn in the latter part of September, though not as the result of any step taken by the Federal army. But a still greater humiliation was in store for the country. The Confederates, about the first of October, were suffered to erect batteries at Cockpit Point and other places on the lower Potomac, which soon practically closed the navigation of the river. That such a serious danger to the Capital should have been allowed quietly to be created struck every one with amazement. The most capable and judicious observers could not understand why the erection of the batteries could not have been prevented, nor why, with

the ample resources, naval and military, at the disposal of the Federal general, the newly erected works could not be captured with their armament and garrison. Nor was there in truth any sufficient reason for tolerating such a dangerous and discreditable state of things. But McClellan resolutely refused to take any steps for the reduction of these batteries. He insisted that the object of any such movement would be gained, without loss of life and without any chance of failure, as the necessary result of the forward movement of the army which he had in contemplation. In this opinion he was doubtless right; but was it wise to tolerate for a day the blockade of the Potomac? What sound objection was there to making an effort to terminate such a mortifying, such an embarrassing, state of things? It would have been good policy from any point of view to organize an expedition to capture the Confederate works and garrison; and the success of such an operation, in view of the abundant resources at McClellan's disposal, ought not to have been doubtful. The refusal of General McClellan to take any steps having this object in view seemed to many cool and sensible men to indicate on his part an inability to take a practical view of the situation, and the hitherto almost universal belief in his capacity was, in consequence, seriously shaken. Any good general, it was urged, ought to recognize the beneficial effect on the *moral* of his troops and on the temper of the public of any successful military operation, and to welcome the opportunity of obtaining any and every advantage over the enemy. The

chance of attaining not only relief from the inconvenience which the blockade of the river caused the Government, but also a tangible, not to say brilliant, success, afforded by a well-conceived and carefully executed descent upon Cockpit Point, for instance, would certainly, it was urged, tempt any general who possessed a spark of the enterprise and resolution which are such essential constituents in the character of an able military leader.

Then, the unfortunate issue, on October 21st, of an exceedingly ill-judged and badly conducted movement across the Potomac at Ball's Bluff, by a portion of General Stone's (Federal) division, had a marked effect in awakening serious concern on the part of clear-headed observers in regard to the management of the army. In this affair, the troops behaved exceedingly well; their defeat was due to the mistakes of the officers who directed the operation.

General McClellan unquestionably intended as late as the latter part of November, 1861, to advance directly upon the Confederate army, whether at Manassas or wherever he might find it. About this time, however, he began to consider several plans for removing the army to the lower Rappahannock or the neighborhood of Fortress Monroe, and he soon decided that one of these movements,—which one, it was not necessary at that time to determine,—would be far preferable to an advance on Richmond by the direct or overland route. Then the roads, which up to the first of December had been good, began not long afterwards to feel the effects of the winter weather, and they soon became utterly im-

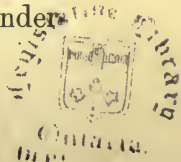
practicable for a large army. This fact, combined with General McClellan's enforced withdrawal from active duty for several weeks in the months of December and January, owing to serious illness, postponed until the early spring of 1862 the consideration of the line of advance to be adopted in Virginia.

Meanwhile operations on the Atlantic coast and the Gulf of Mexico were devised by the general-in-chief, partly to reduce the task of maintaining the blockade, and partly to secure a footing in the Southern States; and expeditions to Hatteras Inlet, and to Roanoke Island and Newberne in North Carolina, to Port Royal and Beaufort in South Carolina, and to New Orleans in Louisiana were planned and set on foot. They were all brilliantly successful. The forts at Hatteras Inlet were reduced and the garrison captured on the 28th of August by an expedition in which the naval forces were commanded by Flag-Officer Stringham and the land forces by Major-General Butler, after a brief and bloodless action. On the 7th of November a considerable fleet under Flag-Officer Dupont reduced Forts Walker and Beauregard in Port Royal Inlet, after a stubborn resistance, and, shortly after, Hilton Head and Beaufort in South Carolina were occupied by a force of some 12,000 men under Brigadier-General Thomas W. Sherman. In the first half of March, 1862, an expedition under Flag-Officer Goldsborough and Major-General Burnside entered Albemarle Sound in North Carolina, reduced the Confederate works on Roanoke Island, capturing many guns and prisoners, pushed on to Newberne, and carried by assault

the defences of that city. Here Burnside established himself with a force of about 12,000 men. Finally, on April 24th, Flag-Officer Farragut, with a large fleet, ran by Forts Jackson and St. Philip on the Mississippi River, and passed up to the city of New Orleans. This exploit, which was marvellously well conceived and brilliantly executed, justly placed Farragut in rank with the most famous naval commanders of the world. Major-General Butler entered New Orleans on May 1st with a force of 6000 men. Pensacola, also, fell into the possession of the United States forces about the 10th of May. Along the coast of Florida, too, all the more important towns were in March, 1862, occupied by Federal troops.

These operations were, with the exception of the capture of Roanoke Island and Newberne, exclusively naval operations; they were conducted with the greatest care, ability and daring, and reflected the highest honor on the naval officers who directed them. The troops, also, which had been in action, had been well led and had been completely successful. It was expected that operations could be undertaken from Newberne against Wilmington, and from Beaufort against Charleston and Savannah, so that the entire line of the Atlantic coast might soon be again under the United States flag, and the blockade of its ports be thereby rendered absolutely complete.

These expectations, however, were not destined to be fulfilled. The land-forces which were sent on these expeditions were not sufficiently large to under-



take such extensive and difficult operations as the capture of Charleston and Savannah. On the other hand, these forces were so large as constantly to encourage the hope that something of importance might be accomplished by their aid. The truth was, that they were unnecessarily large, if the purpose was merely to hold the posts which had been captured, while they were not large enough to achieve the successes which the public, not unnaturally, expected of them. This was finally recognized; and in July, 1862, and again in the early spring of 1864, large detachments were made from the troops stationed on the Atlantic coast to reinforce the Army of the Potomac. It was at last seen that nothing of importance could be looked for if these garrisons were retained at their existing strength, and that it was wiser to recall them to reinforce the main army in Virginia rather than to augment their numbers and undertake fresh enterprises from the points occupied by them.

The capture of New Orleans, however, was a very different matter. It opened the Mississippi River completely as far as Port Hudson; and the Confederate batteries at Port Hudson, and even those at Vicksburg, could be passed, though not without danger, by United States vessels-of-war. In the operations which would now be undertaken for the reduction of the Confederate posts on the lower Mississippi, naval forces could therefore co-operate with those on land. In the matter of supplies alone, whether of subsistence or of ordnance, this co-operation of the navy was a matter of the first importance.



CHAPTER XI.

PLANS AND PREPARATIONS : THE WEST.

BEFORE we take up the consideration of the important military questions, which, on the termination of the neutral attitude of Kentucky in September, 1861, were forced upon the attention of the Government, we must trace, though very briefly, the course of events in Missouri. In the summer of 1861, the Confederates made a determined attempt to obtain control of the State. A force of some 10,000 men was raised, which, under Price and McCulloch, on the 10th of August, defeated Lyon at Wilson's Creek, near Springfield, after a hard fought action in which that invaluable officer lost his life. But the Confederate generals were not in accord, and the advantage was not improved as it might have been. On the other hand, Fremont, who commanded the Federal forces in Missouri, showed grievous incompetency. It is unnecessary to go into details ; suffice it to say, that, on November 2d, he was relieved from command, and was succeeded by General Halleck. A Union army under General Curtis drove the principal Confederate force under Van Dorn out of the State, and, on March 7, 1862, totally defeated

it in an obstinate and bloody battle at Pea Ridge in Arkansas. This decisive victory settled the fate of Missouri beyond further serious question, although the large secessionist population in the State never ceased to give some cause for anxiety, or at least for constant vigilance.

The neutrality of Kentucky, as all intelligent men had long ago perceived, could not last. Its position was too important. On the west the State was bounded by the Mississippi River. Through its borders ran from the mountains of East Tennessee the rivers Tennessee and Cumberland—two most important military thoroughfares. On the south the State was bounded by the insurrectionary State of Tennessee; on the north by the Union States of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. It is not worth while for us to undertake to determine with nicety which party was responsible for breaking the neutrality of a State so situated. A Confederate force seized Columbus on the river Mississippi. A Federal force occupied Paducah at the mouth of the river Tennessee. The State was obliged to declare for one side or the other, and, although the secessionist party was strong and active, the State declared for the Union. On the 20th of September, the legislature called for troops to support the armies of the United States.

By this action, the whole valley of the Mississippi, from that river to the Alleghany Mountains, was opened as a new theatre of war. The contest for the possession of this vast region, which, so long as Kentucky stood between the opposing parties, was necessarily deferred, was now to be fought out from the

river Ohio to the Gulf of Mexico, and, in fact, to the Atlantic Ocean. The military problems involved in this contest were of very great interest and importance. Let us look at them for a moment.

The first thing that strikes one in examining a map of this region is the immense advantage which the control of the rivers,—the Ohio, the Cumberland, the Tennessee, and the Mississippi,—would give to the North in a campaign of invasion. There are two main objects in any such campaign.

The first, and by far the most important, although by no means always recognized as such, is the defeat and destruction of the organized forces of the enemy. To effect this, the invading army may often have to advance many miles into the hostile territory, and it must be regularly supplied from day to day with provisions for the men and forage for the horses. Immense trains of wagons usually accompany armies to provide the means for meeting these wants. Wherever it is possible, an army advances on the line of a railroad, which is carefully kept in repair, so that the requisite supplies may be forwarded over it quickly and regularly. But transportation by rail is liable to innumerable interruptions. The enemy may, for instance, tear up portions of the track, or burn bridges. Detachments of the invading army are always stationed along the line to prevent these occurrences; and the force available for fighting a battle is necessarily by so much diminished. Transportation by water, on the other hand, is liable to none of these accidents, when once the command of the watercourse has been secured. Hence the prob-

lem of bringing to the scene of a decisive battle in the invaded territory a superior force, well supplied in all respects, is greatly facilitated by the existence in that territory of navigable rivers. There is, moreover, no limit to the capacity of a river, so long as there are boats in sufficient number. A railroad, especially a single-track railroad, may be overcrowded, but a lake or a navigable river is always available.

The second object in a campaign of invasion is to overrun the enemy's territory, to occupy railroad centres and other strategical points, so as to prevent or at least to impede the concentration of his forces, to interfere with their receiving their stated supplies, to make it impossible for him to recruit his army from the population, or to obtain subsistence, forage, horses, or other supplies from the country. For an invading army to occupy a hostile region in a way which will secure to it these advantages requires, it is obvious, the freest communication between its several detachments; and the importance of navigable watercourses in this connection need not be pointed out.

A campaign, therefore, in the westerly half of this new theatre of war promised many and obvious advantages to the Federal commanders. By making use of the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers, the United States forces could establish themselves firmly at Nashville and other points on the line of communications on which any Confederate army in Kentucky must necessarily depend. In this way the immediate evacuation of the greater part of Ken-

tucky and of the westerly half of Tennessee by the Confederates would be rendered imperative; and, in addition, they would be forced to give up many of their strong-holds on the Mississippi River in the States of Kentucky and Tennessee, from the impossibility of supplying them with provisions, or even keeping up communications with them, after the Confederate forces had retired from the territory in their vicinity, unless, indeed, the Confederates should obtain control of the Mississippi River itself,—a supposition so improbable as hardly to be worth serious attention.

The Federal Government, seeing the immense importance of securing the control of these inland waters, began, even as early as the spring of 1861 to fit out a fleet of vessels specially designed for service on them; and in the summer and autumn the work was pushed forward as rapidly as was possible in view of the other demands on the administration. Naval officers of distinction, Commander John Rodgers, and, after him, Flag-Officer Foote, were sent to the West to superintend the building and equipment of these vessels. They were of two kinds,—ordinary steamers, converted into ships of war, and entirely new vessels, specially constructed for the exigencies of fighting on the western rivers. Those of the former description were first finished, and some of them took part in the action at Belmont on the Mississippi on November 7, 1861. The whole fleet was ready in January, 1862.

While there were in 1861 several lines of railroad capable of being used to facilitate military opera-

tions in the western portions of the States of Kentucky and Tennessee, there were none suitable for this purpose in the eastern and northeastern portions of those States. Thus, there was a railroad which ran from Columbus, in Kentucky, on the Mississippi River, to Corinth, in the northern part of the State of Mississippi; another from Louisville, Kentucky, to Nashville, Tennessee; another ran almost due south from Nashville to Decatur, Alabama, and yet another ran southeastward from Nashville to Stevenson, Alabama; while the Memphis and Charleston railroad ran in a direction generally eastward from Memphis, through Decatur and Stevenson, to Chattanooga. From Chattanooga, the East Tennessee and Georgia railroad ran northeastwardly through Knoxville, Tennessee, to Lynchburg, Virginia, thus connecting Virginia with the Gulf States. But there were no railroads running from Louisville or Cincinnati southeastward into East Tennessee, nor did any rivers, capable of being utilized by an invading army, intersect that region. East Tennessee, whose people, as we have said before, were devoted to the Union cause, was thus most unfortunately situated. Confederate troops could be thrown into it, by means of the East Tennessee and Georgia railroad, either from Virginia or from the Gulf States, while any Federal army moving upon it from the Ohio River would have to rely for the transportation of its supplies beyond Lebanon, Kentucky, upon the country roads, which in winter are wellnigh impassable, without any assistance from either railroads or rivers. And for a large part of this distance no

supplies, either of food or forage, could be gathered from the surrounding country. It may be added, that the same reasons which would make an invasion of East Tennessee, from Louisville or Cincinnati as a base, a difficult matter, would also make its retention by the Federals a difficult matter; and that a large part of any Federal army which should undertake to invade the country from the Ohio River, or which should attempt to retain possession of it until Chattanooga had been acquired by the Union forces, would have to be distributed at suitable points along the roads, more than two hundred miles long, which connect East Tennessee with Cincinnati or Louisville. These roads, too, it must not be forgotten, ran through a region more or less disaffected to the Union cause.

A movement upon East Tennessee was, however, strongly desired by the authorities at Washington. President Lincoln was very anxious that the Union people of that region, who, in defiance of threats and violence, were openly and strenuously maintaining their loyalty, should, as speedily as possible, be rescued by the strong arm of the United States from their perilous and trying position. He saw clearly the great political advantage which would accrue from a prompt and effectual furnishing of support to these distressed Unionists. He hoped that a permanent addition to the resources of the Union could be made by the acquisition of East Tennessee, similar to that which had been made by the acquisition of West Virginia. He also saw that, by the occupation of East Tennessee, a great artery of communication

between Virginia and the Gulf States,—the East Tennessee and Georgia railroad,—would be severed; and that the Confederate cause must be thereby more or less embarrassed.¹ General McClellan also maintained that the occupation of East Tennessee was essential to the success of his proposed campaign in Virginia. Both the President and the General-in-chief, therefore, strongly urged upon the successive commanders in Kentucky the importance of an early advance into East Tennessee.

But, besides the topographical and other difficulties in the way of such an advance, of which mention has already been made, the state of affairs in Kentucky was such in the fall of 1861 as to cause great anxiety to any prudent commander, and to induce the postponement for the time being of any projects of taking the offensive.

While the neutrality of Kentucky was unquestionably of advantage to the Union party in that State, it had this drawback, namely,—that, while it lasted, the troops raised in the Western and Northwestern States were sent either to Missouri or to Virginia, in both of which States hostilities were actually in progress; so that, when the armistice terminated, the Union force south of the Ohio was insignificant, and could not easily be augmented. Then the task of raising and organizing Union troops, in a State where public opinion was so divided as it was in Kentucky, was one of great difficulty. It seemed also very probable, now that the State had become a part of the theatre of war, that the enemy would make a

¹ 5 N. & H., 61.

strenuous effort to overrun it, and attach it to the Confederacy. The responsibilities of the commanding officer in Kentucky were, therefore, very great, and his tasks very onerous.

Brigadier-General Anderson, who had been promoted to this rank in recognition of his services at Fort Sumter, commanded the militia of Kentucky during the period of neutrality, and for a few weeks thereafter; but he found his health unequal to the strain, and, early in October, he was relieved at his own request. He was succeeded by General William T. Sherman. This officer, whose abilities were confessedly of a very high order, found himself in command of a small force, ill-disciplined, and part of it badly armed. His antagonists were vigilant and active. In the middle of October, his available troops numbered by his own estimate not much over 20,000.¹ They were divided into three bodies; one, under General Nelson, near the easterly frontier of Kentucky, one, under General Thomas, confronting a Confederate force under Zollicoffer near Cumberland Gap, and the main body, under Sherman himself, behind Green River, at Nolin, facing the principal Confederate force at Bowling Green, a town situated at the point where the Louisville and Nashville railroad crosses the Big Barren River, about fifty miles from Nashville. General A. S. Johnston, the Confederate commander, tried in every way to create the impression that his army was much larger than it really was; and, in great part, he succeeded. Gen-

¹ 3 W. R., 548. His force was much larger than this, on paper, at least, on November 10, 1861. Johnston, 538.

eral Sherman wrote to Washington on the 4th of November that the enemy far outnumbered his own troops.¹ The Confederate force at Bowling Green was estimated by General C. F. Smith about the same time at 40,000 men.² It was really not a third of that number. In addition to the Confederate troops at Bowling Green, General Zollicoffer held Cumberland Gap and its vicinity with a force of 5000 or 6000 men, and General Polk held Columbus and other places on the Mississippi with 10,000 or 12,000 men. Works were also erected on the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers; they were known as Forts Henry and Donelson. There was also a force of 2000 or 3000 men in the eastern part of Kentucky near the Virginia line. The strength of these various bodies was not accurately known by the Federal generals, and no doubt was usually much exaggerated. But however this might be, it seemed to General Sherman absolutely out of the question at that time for the Federals to take the offensive in any direction. Their forces ought to be largely augmented before any advance could be safely made, and the men needed a great deal of training to make them capable of acting efficiently in the field. The suggestion which the Secretary of War made to him on October 16, 1861, that he should endeavor to occupy East Tennessee,³ did not therefore meet with his acceptance. He felt that no step of that kind could then prudently be taken.

¹ 4 W. R., 332. Cf. I Sherman, 200 *et seq.*

² 4 W. R., 340.

³ 3 W. R., 548; I Sherman, 202, 203.

On November 1, 1861, General McClellan succeeded General Scott in charge of all the armies of the United States. Early in that month he sent General Buell to succeed General Sherman, who had desired to be relieved from command in Kentucky, and who was transferred to General Halleck's Department at St. Louis. McClellan organized the Federal forces in the West in two Departments under two commanders. General Halleck was assigned to the command of the Department of the Missouri, which included, besides the States of Missouri and Arkansas, that portion of Kentucky which lay west of the Cumberland River. To General Buell was given the Department of the Ohio, which embraced the remaining portion of Kentucky and the State of Tennessee. These officers acted independently of each other, and took their orders directly from General McClellan. The arrangement was an unwise and short-lived one; there was every reason for putting the Federal forces in the Mississippi Valley under a single control. But McClellan evidently expected that Halleck alone would be equal to the task of opening the Mississippi River; he looked to Buell to invade and occupy East Tennessee. His instructions to both officers were in very general terms, but Halleck was ordered to occupy important points in Missouri and to concentrate the mass of his troops on or near the Mississippi, "prepared for ulterior operations";¹ while Buell's attention was directed to the "necessity of entering East Tennessee as soon as it" could "be done with reasonable

¹ 3 W. R., 568.

chances of success.”¹ In both points McClellan’s judgment proved to be at fault; Buell’s army was, in the operations of the ensuing spring, needed to reinforce that of Halleck, and, in fact, his Department was merged in that of Halleck; and there ultimately proved to be no way of entering East Tennessee until an advance from Nashville to Chattanooga had secured for the Federals that important line of railway communication.

The Confederate Government, with better judgment, gave to General Albert Sidney Johnston the entire charge of military affairs west of the Alleghany Mountains.

The Confederates, as we have seen, had, early in September, seized the commanding positions of Columbus and Hickman on the river Mississippi, and the Federals had taken possession of Paducah and Smithland at the mouths of the rivers Tennessee and Cumberland. Neither of the belligerents, however, was prepared for further active operations. Both sides had enough to do in raising troops for the inevitable contest. There was in both camps great deficiency of arms, but the Federals procured them sooner and in greater quantity than their opponents were able to do. There was also more energy shown by the Western than by the Southwestern States in the raising of men and furnishing of supplies. The Governors of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio—Yates, Morton, and Dennison—were men of marked ability and zeal. And it need not be said that the resources of every kind at the disposal of the United States

¹ 4 W. R., 355.

Government were vastly in excess of those which were available to President Davis. The consequence was, that, in less than six months from the first of September, Generals Halleck and Buell could put into the field in Kentucky at least 100,000 men, well armed and equipped; while General Johnston had not over 75,000 with whom to maintain his hold on the States of Kentucky and Tennessee. The Federal river-fleet was also far superior to its antagonist in armament and general efficiency.

While General Halleck had all that he could attend to in bringing order out of the confusion in which Fremont had left affairs in Missouri, and in restoring the ascendancy of the Union cause there, which had been deplorably lowered, General Buell remained quiet in Kentucky, and devoted his constant attention to the organization, drill, and discipline of his troops. He was a thorough soldier; not even McClellan surpassed him in intimate knowledge of the various duties of officers and men, or in strength of conviction that prolonged and unremitting attention to these duties was the only means by which the volunteer regiments could ever acquire the solidity of an army. Buell was a strict,—in fact, almost too strict,—disciplinarian; but he was a great deal more than this; he sought to imbue his troops with the same principles of military duty which he held himself; his ideal of the soldier's character was of the highest; and the services which he rendered in this regard to the troops of his Department,—afterwards known to the world as the Army of the Cumberland,—cannot be overestimated. Buell was also a very

able man ; in military sagacity, in clear and unprejudiced vision, in decision of character, he had few equals among the generals on either side.

While Buell's army was thus taking shape and acquiring the consistency of a well-organized body of troops, a radical difference became developed between his views in regard to the main object of the operations which should be undertaken in Kentucky and Tennessee, and those of President Lincoln and General McClellan. The latter, as we have seen, had prescribed to Buell the occupation of East Tennessee as his principal aim ; and this injunction was cordially seconded by the President. Neither of them, however, gave any thought to the practicability of the undertaking,—still less to the relative importance of a movement upon East Tennessee, when compared with operations in the western portion of the same theatre of war. The General-in-chief apparently thought only of his projected campaign in Virginia, to the success of which he erroneously supposed the occupation of East Tennessee would powerfully contribute.¹ The President was naturally more attracted by the prospect of relieving the Unionists of Knoxville than by the hope of defeating Sidney Johnston. But Buell, who, unlike Lincoln, was a military man, and who was a far abler military man than McClellan, was not long in coming to the conclusion that the invasion of East Tennessee could not be undertaken except in conjunction with military operations in Western

¹ Virginia was held by the Confederates for a year and a half after East Tennessee had fallen into the possession of the United States.

Kentucky and Tennessee. He saw that, so long as the Confederates held their positions at Columbus and Bowling Green, and so long as the communications between those places, and also with Nashville, were uninterrupted, an advance from the Ohio to Knoxville would be out of the question,—the line of operations of the invading column would be exposed throughout its whole length to the attack of the unbroken Confederate army. It was clearly necessary to defeat Johnston's army before undertaking the invasion of East Tennessee. The case was altogether different from that of West Virginia, which was a direct advance through a friendly country, and where no Confederate army menaced the line of operations.

Accordingly we find Buell, on November 27, 1861, only three weeks after his arrival at Louisville, when replying to a letter¹ and subsequent telegram² from McClellan urging an immediate advance upon East Tennessee, recommending³ "the movement of two flotilla columns" on the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers, in conjunction with a land movement on Nashville and an advance into East Tennessee. To this, McClellan, unable to see the vital connection between these operations, replies on the 29th,⁴ urging Buell to secure East Tennessee first, and then, if he possesses the means, to take Nashville. McClellan follows this letter up with another on December 3d,⁵ which is an amazing letter for one occupying

¹ 7 W. R., 447.

² *Ib.*, 450.

⁴ *Ib.*, 457.

³ *Ib.*, 450, 451.

⁵ *Ib.*, 468.

his position to write. In it, he deliberately ignores the military conditions of the problem, and bases his recommendations wholly on sympathy for the unfortunate loyalists of East Tennessee. "I feel sure," he says, "that the best strategical move in this case will be that dictated by the simple feelings of humanity. . . . For the sake of these Eastern Tennesseans who have taken part with us, I would gladly sacrifice mere military advantages; they deserve our protection, and at all hazards they must have it." This unconscious substitution of a generous and chivalric sentiment for the conviction that his duty to his country demanded that he should secure the greatest military advantages for the Union possible under the circumstances, is thoroughly characteristic of the mental and moral confusion which often prevailed in the mind of General McClellan.

On December 10th, Buell wrote a long letter to McClellan,¹ in which, while expressly recognizing the importance attached by his chief to the movement on East Tennessee, he intimates very strongly that, in his judgment, that movement will have to be "merged in the general line of operations," "the details and final determination" of which he thinks he should be lacking in ordinary discretion if he did not "reserve." He contents himself with making some suggestions in regard to the resistance to be expected from the enemy's works on the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers. He probably thought that McClellan would easily divine the nature of the plan

¹ 7 W. R., 487.

he had in mind, and would be quick to see that it promised great, not to say decisive, results. But McClellan saw nothing in Buell's letter but a recommendation that Halleck should make a diversion up the rivers with the hope of distracting the enemy's attention from Buell's invasion of East Tennessee. To this he had already drawn Halleck's attention, but that officer had replied¹ that he had no troops to spare for the purpose. A few days later McClellan again wrote to Halleck,² asking him to give him "some idea of the time necessary to prepare an expedition against Columbus, or one up the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers, in connection with Buell's movements."

On December 29th, Buell again wrote to the General-in-chief, and this time expressed himself with more distinctness. He said:—³

"It is my conviction, that all the force that can possibly be collected should be brought to bear on that front of which Columbus and Bowling Green may be said to be the flanks. The centre, that is, the Cumberland and Tennessee where the railroad crosses them, is now the most vulnerable point. I regard it as the most important strategical point in the whole field of operations."

During the illness of General McClellan, the President requested Halleck and Buell to communicate directly with each other. Accordingly, on January

¹ 8 W. R., 409; Dec. 6, 1861.

² *Ib.*, 419; Dec. 10, 1861. See also, McClellan to Halleck, Jan. 3, 1862; 7 W. R., 527.

³ 7 W. R., 520.

3, 1862, Buell wrote to Halleck,¹ giving him his view of the military situation, almost in the language cited above, and suggesting that the attack on the centre should be made by two gun-boat expeditions, with 20,000 men on the two rivers. There should also be rapid movements of troops to the points where the railroad from Louisville and Bowling Green to Nashville crosses the rivers. Halleck, however, had his hands full of the affairs of Missouri, where everything was in a very disorganized condition.² He wrote³ to Buell on the 6th that he could not put into the field in Kentucky over 10,000 or 11,000 men. Moreover he wholly disapproved of the plan suggested by Buell. "It strikes me," he said, "that to operate from Louisville and [also from] Paducah or Cairo against an enemy at Bowling Green is a plain case of exterior lines, like that of McDowell and Patterson, which, unless each of the exterior columns is superior to the enemy, leads to disaster ninety-nine times in a hundred." General Halleck's point of strategy may have been sound, although the facilities afforded by the rivers for retreat in the event of the troops sent by water encountering a superior force may have been overlooked by him; but, besides the probability that the United States forces would be decidedly superior in strength to any troops they might encounter, it was plain that there was no other way than that suggested by Gen-

¹ 7 W. R., 528.

² Halleck to McClellan; Dec. 6, 1861: 8 W. R., 408, 409.

³ 7 W. R., 533. He also wrote to the same effect to the President on January 6, 1862. *Ib.*, 532, 533.

eral Buell by which the forces of both commanders could be employed against the enemy on the lines of operation proposed, which, if practicable, certainly promised the greatest advantages. This was, in fact, finally recognized by Halleck himself. The truth is, General Halleck had his time and thoughts fully occupied with the affairs of Missouri. It was a great mistake on McClellan's part that he did not entrust Buell with the entire control of all the forces in Kentucky and Tennessee. Buell was able from his central position at Louisville to take a general view of the whole theatre of war in those States. He very early saw the importance of a comprehensive scheme for the defeat of the Confederate forces and the recovery of the two States; and he was one of the first to appreciate the advantages which might be gained by making use of the two great rivers which intersected the line occupied by his antagonist.

General Buell's views, however, as we have observed above, were not understood by General McClellan, who, preoccupied as his mind was with an invasion of East Tennessee as auxiliary to his own campaign against Richmond, failed to catch the real meaning of his subordinate's letters. But in the telegram to the President, on January 5th, General Buell stated ¹ distinctly that he had always doubted the wisdom of the East Tennessee project, "as an unconditional measure. As earnestly as I wish to accomplish it," he said, "my judgment has from the first been decidedly against it, if it should render at all doubtful the success of a movement against the

¹ 7 W. R., 530.

great power of the rebellion in the West, which is mainly arrayed on the line from Columbus to Bowling Green, and can speedily be concentrated at any point of that line which is attacked singly." Mr. Lincoln replied at once.¹ "Your despatch of yesterday," he said, "disappoints and distresses me." The President went on to say that he would rather have a point on the railroad south of Cumberland Gap than Nashville. He dwelt on the grievous disappointment which would be felt by the people of East Tennessee when they should hear of General Buell's views. McClellan also wrote to Buell,² saying that the latter's telegram developed "a radical difference" between their views which he (McClellan) deeply regretted. Then he proceeded :

"My own general plans for the prosecution of the war make the speedy occupation of East Tennessee and its lines of railway matters of absolute necessity. Bowling Green and Nashville are in that connection of very secondary importance at the present moment. My own advance cannot, according to my present views, be made until your troops are solidly established in the eastern portion of Tennessee. If that is not possible, a complete and prejudicial change in my own plans at once becomes necessary.

"Interesting as Nashville may be to the Louisville interests, it strikes me that its possession is of very secondary importance in comparison with the immense results that would arise from the adherence to our cause of the masses in East Tennessee, West

¹ 7 W. R., 927.

² *Ib.*, 531 : Jan. 6, 1862.

North Carolina, South Carolina, North Georgia, and Alabama, results that I feel assured would ere long flow from the movement I allude to."

General McClellan concluded by saying that, as Halleck would not be able to make the movement up the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers at present, Buell might make an advance into East Tennessee without waiting for that.

Nothing shows more clearly the imaginative side of McClellan's mind, and his absolute inability to take any interest in or bestow any careful thought upon any subject that did not appeal to his imagination, than this curious letter. To the problem of making an advance into East Tennessee, over roads wellnigh impassable in winter, with the communications of the invading column exposed for almost the entire distance to the attacks of an enemy holding Columbus, Bowling Green, and Nashville, and having railway connections between all three places, General McClellan had evidently given no attention at all. Nor, again, had he given a thought to the enormous prestige which would be won for the Union cause if Johnston's line should be forced at Forts Henry and Donelson, and he himself be compelled precipitately to abandon Bowling Green, and even Nashville, the capital of the State of Tennessee. Such a success as this, entailing, as it was sure to do, the evacuation of Columbus and other strong points on the Mississippi, was certain to encourage Union men not only in East Tennessee, but everywhere. Moreover, a line of communication by rail from Louisville would, by the success of Buell's plan, be ren-

dered available as far as Nashville, at least, for a force advancing on East Tennessee by the gate of Chattanooga. But it is plain that none of these things even entered the mind of General McClellan. His head was full of his own campaign in Virginia, and nothing interested him that was not, or might not be supposed in some way to be, related to his own operations there. And, as a sort of justification for his decision, he had conjured up before his imagination a vision of an eager and grateful population, in half of the States of the Confederacy, flocking to the Union standard as soon as it should be unfurled on the mountains of East Tennessee, and of "immense results" therefrom arising.

Buell, like the good soldier that he was, accepted, without further argument, the decision of his chief. The 1st division of his army had been stationed at various points on the left of his line, and had been placed under the command of General George H. Thomas, who was recognized as one of the best officers in the service. Towards the latter part of December the Confederate force under General Zollicoffer, which had passed into Kentucky through Cumberland Gap, took up a position not far from Somerset, on the Cumberland River, and assumed a threatening attitude. General Buell ordered Thomas to concentrate his troops and attack him. The roads were almost impassable, and it took Thomas more than a fortnight to make a connection with the brigade that was observing Zollicoffer's army. The Confederates themselves, fearing this concentration of the Union forces, took the offensive and attacked

Thomas at a place called Mill Springs. They were totally defeated, losing twelve guns, besides prisoners, flags, and stores. Their army was broken up, and they evacuated their position with precipitation. The action was a small affair, judging it by the numbers of troops engaged,—some 4000 on each side,—but it was a complete victory for the Union arms, and gave great encouragement to the Union cause everywhere. The President and the Secretary of War, Mr. Stanton, issued a congratulatory order to the officers and men engaged,¹ but for some reason, not capable, in our judgment, of any satisfactory explanation, General Thomas's name was not even mentioned in the order. His friends have always felt aggrieved by this unprovoked slight inflicted on him by the administration of Mr. Lincoln, and with good reason.² Thomas was one of the ablest officers in the Union army; his loyalty was conspicuous, for he was a Virginian; his courage and capacity were beyond all question; and this battle, which he directed in person and brought to such a triumphant issue, was the first victory of any importance won for the Union arms. He not only deserved the honor of having his name brought to the attention of the public by the Government, but promotion as well. But he was a man without political affiliations of any kind, and it is probable that the Government thought that

¹ 7 W. R., 102.

² Van Horne's *Thomas*, 56. "The words attributed to the President: 'He is a Virginian, let him wait,' was the accepted explanation at the time." See also Piatt and Boynton, 127. We sincerely trust that no such unworthy remark was made by Mr. Lincoln.

there was nothing to be gained by conferring any special mark of distinction upon him.

It is not likely that in the frightful condition in which the roads then were,¹ any invasion of East Tennessee would have been attempted as the immediate consequence of the victory of Mill Springs.² But before any step of this kind could be taken, the situation in the western part of Kentucky suddenly assumed a gravity which absorbed all the attention of General Buell, and caused him to arrest Thomas's further movements.

It will be remembered that General Halleck had, early in January, expressed his inability to co-operate with General Buell to any serviceable extent, and had also disapproved of his plan of operations. He indeed ordered³ General Grant, who commanded the District of Cairo, to make, early in January, a demonstration up the Tennessee River in conjunction with the gun-boats under Commodore Foote, and those active officers performed their task with alacrity. But this was a matter of no importance. On January 20th, Halleck wrote to the General-in-chief,⁴ advocating a movement up the Cumberland and Tennessee, making Nashville the first objective point. "This," he said, "would turn Columbus, and force the abandonment of Bowling Green." He, however, stated

¹ Thomas to Buell, Jan. 13, 1862; same to Schoepf, same date; 7 W. R., 550. Fry to Wood, Jan. 16, 1862; Mitchel to Buell, same date; 7 W. R., 556. Buell to McClellan, Feb. 1, 1862; 7 W. R., 931.

² 7 W. R., 932.

³ *Ib.*, 533; Jan. 6, 1862.

⁴ 8 W. R., 508-510.

it as his opinion that "the plan should not be attempted without a large force, not less than 60,000 men." He renewed his expressions of disapproval of a movement on Bowling Green to be made simultaneously with this advance of his up the rivers, and suggested that all of Buell's army "not required to secure the line of Green River," which was the line occupied by Buell's army, should be sent to him.

It does not appear that McClellan returned any definite answer to this communication; but Halleck evidently, on consideration, found the project more feasible than he had at first supposed, and he determined to carry it out with the troops of his own Department. It may well be imagined that the opinions¹ of General Grant, who commanded at Cairo, and of Commodore Foote, that Fort Henry could be carried and permanently occupied, and that from that point operations could be carried on against Fort Donelson, had considerable weight with General Halleck in arriving at his decision. Halleck, in truth, was too busy to look into the facts himself; he was, besides, of a very cautious and methodical disposition; but he was by no means destitute of ambition; and there can be but little doubt that the suggestion first made to him by Buell, and afterwards independently confirmed by Grant and Foote, set him to thinking whether there was not a first-rate opportunity offered here for him to accomplish a great stroke. He was not an unduly obstinate man, and it would seem that in this case he changed his opinion with a suddenness that was (to say the

¹ 7 W. R., 120, 121; Jan. 28 and 29, 1862.

least of it) remarkable, considering his previous utterances on the subject.¹

Accordingly, on January 30th, Halleck telegraphed Grant² to make his preparations to take and hold Fort Henry, and, the same day, he sent him detailed instructions in writing. With this expedition the campaign of 1862 opened in Kentucky.

¹ General Buell, writing to McClellan under date of February 1st makes an amusing complaint of Halleck's precipitate change of mind. He says:—"While you were sick, by direction of the President, I proposed to Halleck some concert of action between us. He answered, 'I can do nothing; name a day for a demonstration.' Night before last I received a despatch from him saying, 'I have ordered an advance on Fort Henry and Dover. It will be made immediately.' I protest against such prompt proceedings, as though I had nothing to do but command 'Commence firing' when he starts off." 7 W. R., 933.

² 7 W. R., 121.



NOTES TO CHAPTER XI.

1. It has sometimes been claimed on behalf of General Thomas that he favored an invasion of East Tennessee in the autumn and winter of 1861.¹ Passages in his letters to Anderson and Sherman show, it is alleged, that, in his opinion, as a military man, the movement was practicable and advisable. But it must be remembered that Thomas was in a subordinate position; his task was to report faithfully and intelligently the condition of affairs in his front, and cheerfully to obey the orders of his superior officer. It was no part of his duty to compare the relative importance of different lines of operation. It was not for him to plan the invasion, and to make the arrangements, the dispositions of troops, which would be needed to maintain the communications of the invading column. In our judgment, Thomas never went farther than to give to his chief a cheerful assurance of success, provided the needed troops should be furnished, the requisite supplies and transportation forthcoming, and the communications duly maintained.

It is not possible, therefore, to cite the opinion of General Thomas against that of General Buell, in

¹ 5 N. & H., 62 *et seq.* Van Horne's *Thomas*, 41; 57 *et seq.*,—where the writer, after an extended examination into the practicability of the movement into East Tennessee, prefers it to the movement on Nashville. See also, Piatt and Boynton, chapters v. and vi. See *post*, note 2.

regard to the practicability and advisability of an invasion of East Tennessee in the autumn of 1861.¹ Thomas never considered the question from the point of view from which Buell was necessarily obliged always to consider it,—that is, in reference to the (supposed) strength and distribution of the enemy's forces in Kentucky and Tennessee, his intentions and plans, and the probable importance of proposed operations by the Union forces in the western portion of the theatre of war, for the success of which it might very possibly be essential that the Union commander in Kentucky should be free to dispose of his entire force in co-operating with and assisting the army of Halleck.

2. With reference to the movement upon East Tennessee, it may be freely conceded that it was on many grounds very desirable for the Union cause that that region should be occupied by United States troops. But was it wise to undertake the movement until the hold of the Confederates on the States of Kentucky and Tennessee had been loosened and their army had been beaten? General Buell thought not; and it seems to us that he was clearly right. The first task of the army under Buell surely was to defeat the army under Johnston; that done, East Tennessee, or any other part of the surrounding country, could easily be occupied. The comprehensive scheme which Buell counselled aimed at a violent breaking up of the Confederate arrangements for the defence of the two States, and a great, and perhaps a decisive, battle was morally certain ultimately to

¹ See Van Horne's *Thomas*, 50, 51.

be fought, as in fact it was.¹ With the superiority of force which the Federals possessed, the result of such an encounter ought not to be doubtful; but, as everything depended on the result, the entire strength of the Department ought to be arrayed in line to gain the victory. Any operation, therefore, which diminished the number of men disposable for such a decisive combat, as the invasion of East Tennessee was certain to do, it was wiser to postpone for the time being.

Apart from these considerations, the advance upon East Tennessee by way of Lebanon and Somerset necessitated the transportation of supplies and the maintenance of communications for some two hundred miles over country roads, never good, and well-nigh impassable in winter. Mr. Van Horne, in his attempt² to glorify General Thomas for his alleged opinion in favor of invading East Tennessee, mentions President Lincoln's recommendation to Congress to appropriate money to build a railroad from Kentucky to East Tennessee.³ This suggestion was not acted on, yet Mr. Van Horne, in the heat of argument, apparently, virtually assumes the existence of this railroad as lending force to Thomas's opinion. The result is that the reader is bewildered, and the criticism worthless.

3. It may not be out of place to state here succinctly what we have learned respecting the views of the President and his generals in regard to the

¹ At Shiloh, on April 6 and 7, 1862.

² Van Horne's *Thomas*, 60.

³ See 5 N. & H., 66, 67.

plan of campaign in Kentucky and Tennessee, in the spring of 1862. Mr. Lincoln and General McClellan were, from first to last, in favor of a movement on East Tennessee, and of that only. General Halleck, up to the time when the President and General Buell communicated with him, in the first week in January, had given no thought to any possible military operations in Kentucky and Tennessee; he contributed no suggestions of value to the plans which were then brought to his attention, and, in fact, as late as the 20th of January, his opinion was adverse to the scheme proposed. General Buell alone, and from the very first, too, saw the importance of framing a comprehensive scheme; he, and he only, thought it out; he urged it again and again on the unwilling attention of McClellan and Halleck; and it is to him, and to him only, that the credit of the conception of this plan belongs. It was a great pity that he was not entrusted with the task of carrying it into execution.





CHAPTER XII.

LINCOLN AND McCLELLAN.

MAJOR-GENERAL McCLELLAN, as we have seen,¹ had, before he was taken ill, begun to consider the desirability of availing himself of the facilities presented by the water-front of the State of Virginia in transporting his army from the immediate neighborhood of Washington to the immediate neighborhood of Richmond, where he could be supplied by transports with all needed ammunition and subsistence. The advantages of water-communication were many and obvious. We have spoken of this subject before, in connection with General Buell's proposed movement up the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers. There was in the nature of things no reason why these advantages should not be as eagerly availed of in one theatre of war as in another, if the other conditions of the problem were equally favorable. At first sight, it was as tempting to send a strong force up the James to threaten Richmond, with the expectation of inducing the precipitate evacuation of Manassas and even of Richmond itself, as to move upon Fort Donelson with the intention of forcing Sidney

¹ *Ante*, 183.

Johnston to retreat from Bowling Green and abandon Nashville. McClellan was greatly attracted by a scheme of this character; it appealed strongly to his imagination; it seemed to promise startling and speedy and decisive results. He got wholly out of conceit with the advance on Manassas, to which he had, during the autumn, encouraged the Government to look forward as probable before the roads should become impassable.¹ He changed his tone, and temporized with the President and Secretary of War. He thought that he saw in this scheme of transporting the army by water much more brilliant results, but until he had thought it out and made up his own mind, he would not speak plainly as to his plans. It is also quite certain that he thought that two or three more months of drill and discipline would improve the condition of the army. The older regiments would be none the worse for this further time spent in learning their duties, while for the later-arrived troops such a season of preliminary work was well-nigh indispensable. While he was considering the matter, he fell ill. This was in December, 1861.

For at least six weeks before this happened, the inactivity of the army had been the cause of great dissatisfaction among public men in Washington, and, in fact, although to a less extent, throughout the North. It was not easy for men wholly unfamiliar with war, who not only had never done military service themselves, but who possessed to the full the characteristic Anglo-Saxon indifference

¹ McClellan to Cameron; 5 W. R., 11.

to, not to say contempt for, military art and soldierly training, to believe that a hundred thousand men, of their own race, with arms in their hands, animated by a genuine and exalted patriotism, could not without further delay be led to victory by a brave and energetic general. The experience of Bull Run had been to a great degree forgotten. The difference between an army and a congeries of volunteer regiments was not appreciated.

It is certainly possible that much of this misunderstanding of the military situation might have been overcome if it had been practicable for the General-in-chief to declare his views respecting the needs of the army and his intentions respecting its employment. But this, as the slightest reflection shows, was entirely out of the question. General McClellan could not openly state that he had determined to retain his troops in their quarters until spring should render the roads practicable, or until all his regiments had enjoyed the advantage of several months of camp-life, for this would be to give Johnston an opportunity of aiding any of the other generals of the Confederacy who might for the time being need assistance. To keep as large a force of the enemy as was possible stationed quietly at Manassas was obviously desirable for the success of the expeditions to Beaufort, to Newberne, and to New Orleans; and therefore it would not do to permit any official or semi-official announcement of a postponement of active operations by the Army of the Potomac. Hence McClellan, who never took any one, not even the President, into his confidence, was accused of in-

decision and of breaking his word, when the fact was that he had made up his mind that it would be far better for the army to defer taking the field until the spring, but was unwilling, for the reasons mentioned above, to say so plainly to any one.

The consequences to McClellan himself were naturally and inevitably most unfortunate. Distrust of him grew day by day in the minds of many influential men in and out of Congress. The public became clamorous for an advance of the army. During the months of October and November the weather was fine, and the roads were excellent. The army numbered in all upwards of 150,000 men. More than 100,000, so it seemed to the public, which did not concern itself about making the necessary deductions from the aggregate figures,¹ could have gone forth to Manassas, after leaving Washington, Baltimore, and all other places needing garrisons entirely secure, so far, at any rate, as mere numbers were concerned. The enemy were not far to seek. The country was impatient. People had got tired of waiting for news. The expenses of maintaining the military and naval establishments were enormous. Public opinion demanded another trial of strength between the two armies,—another duel. The feeling was that the athletes had been trained long enough,—that it was quite time for the day to be set for the great struggle.

In this, however, the public were mistaken. The army was not ready, in the autumn of 1861, to commence an active campaign.² For the hard tasks, the

¹ See note 2 ; *post*, 258.

² Cf. Smith's C. W. P. 40.

rude experiences, the frequent disappointments, the severe fighting of aggressive warfare, the men were not then sufficiently disciplined. The army was not at that time welded into a compact and vigorous organism. The demand of the public evidently sprang from an essentially erroneous notion of the nature and conditions of civilized warfare. A trial of strength between two armies rarely takes place until the endurance, fortitude, patience, and obedience of the men have been put to almost every conceivable test; it is in these preliminary experiences that the priceless value of discipline, of real soldierly feeling, of military habits, is shown; and it is this which the non-military public does not know, and is always most unwilling to learn. Once in a long while, it is true, there is an exception to this rule; it sometimes, though rarely, happens, that raw, inexperienced troops get their first military experience in battle. Bunker Hill was such a case, in the Revolutionary war. The battle of Shiloh, in our late war, as we shall soon see, was another, so far as Grant's army was concerned. But occurrences of this nature are so rare, and the issue of any such struggle is so doubtful, that no competent military man will take the field, if he can help it, except at the head of well disciplined soldiers and of a well organized force. The successful invasion of West Virginia and the easy successes along the Atlantic coast are not exceptions to the rule above laid down. They were operations where the force of the winning party was so largely in excess of that of their opponents that no resistance worthy of the name was made.

Much of this feverish impatience would no doubt have been dissipated if McClellan had seen fit to organize an expedition for the reduction of one or more of the Confederate batteries on the lower Potomac, and, by taking every possible pains to provide for all contingencies, entrusting its conduct to one of his best officers, and securing the always ready and efficient co-operation of the navy, have rendered its successful accomplishment as certain as was in the nature of things possible. One other thing, too, he should have done; he should have taken Norfolk, a perfectly practicable thing to do, taking into account its distance from Richmond, and the fact that the Federal command of the sea would have enabled the General-in-chief to concentrate a large force in its immediate vicinity in a very few days. This operation should have been attempted for the purpose, among others, of preventing the Confederates from building any iron-clad vessels of war, such as, it was rumored in Washington, were, in the autumn of 1861, then under construction in the Gosport navy-yard. But General McClellan would not undertake these expeditions. He insisted on keeping his army perfectly idle, and he felt himself obliged to maintain a studied and absolute reticence respecting his future plans. It was inevitable that the confidence of the public in him should decline, and that the President and Cabinet should fall into an attitude of antagonism towards a general who manifested so little enterprise and maintained so impenetrable a reserve.

During the illness of the General-in-chief, President

Lincoln took the unusual course of consulting with several of the more prominent generals in the army, and especially with Generals McDowell and Franklin. The former of these officers has preserved a record of these consultations.¹ They were not specially noteworthy in a military point of view, for neither of the officers had expected to be called upon to frame a plan for the movement of the army, nor did either of them possess the requisite information in regard to its strength, the condition of the various bodies of which it was composed, or the numerous other points, an intimate acquaintance with which was necessary in order to frame a comprehensive scheme for the employment of so large a force. But the record of General McDowell is interesting as showing the very despondent state of President Lincoln's mind at this time,—the middle of January, 1862. "To use his own expression," writes McDowell, "If something was not soon done, the bottom would be out of the whole affair." Yet the army near Washington was large and constantly increasing; it was admirably organized; it was in excellent spirits and fine condition. It could not march, it is true, for the Virginia roads were for the moment practically impassable; but in a few weeks the mud would dry up, and a spring campaign would be possible. In the meantime, the troops were well housed and well fed; they were daily improving in drill; and they were learning by protracted habits of soldierly life to become soldiers in fact as well as in name. It was much the same with the Western

¹ Swinton, 79 *et seq.*

armies; as a whole, things were going on well with them. Even in Missouri, Halleck was bringing order out of confusion. There was, in reality, nothing to cause despondency in the mind of any man at all accustomed to affairs on a large scale, whether public or private; any experienced business man, for instance, who within a year after the corporation under his management had been crippled by some financial tempest, should be able to report to his stockholders a similar improvement in their concerns, would feel anything but despondent,—he would, on the contrary, feel that there was every ground for encouragement. He would be neither surprised nor dejected by delays,—for his experience would have taught him that delays are to be expected in all human affairs. He would keep his eye fixed on the essential elements in the work before him; and, especially, if he were in charge of the undertaking, he would be on his guard against yielding to momentary discouragement, and careful always to maintain a constant and cheerful courage. But to President Lincoln, absolutely without experience (as he was) in the administration of public affairs, and without the advantage of having been concerned in the management of business enterprises on a large scale, never having been brought, even as a lawyer, into contact with important undertakings, the tremendous task, the direction of which was forced upon him, was not only a novel task, in so far as it was of a military and not of a civil nature, but its conduct entailed great anxiety and brought with it an unusual and painful sense of responsibility.

We are then quite prepared to believe General McClellan when he tells us that, on his recovery, he found "that excessive anxiety for an immediate movement of the Army of the Potomac had taken possession of the minds of the Administration." In this "anxiety," Mr. Stanton, who had succeeded Mr. Cameron as Secretary of War, fully shared. Stanton, who had been Attorney-General under Buchanan, was brought into Mr. Lincoln's Cabinet as representing those democrats who heartily supported the war; and he assuredly did not belie the expectations which the President had formed respecting him. Nothing could exceed his determination to push forward affairs at whatever cost; full of energy himself, he was intolerant of delay from whatever cause it might arise. Utterly ignorant of military matters; despising from the bottom of his soul what is known as military science; making no secret of his general distrust of educated officers; rarely, if ever, lending an intelligent support to any general in the service; treating them all in the way in which the Committee of Public Safety treated the generals of the first French Republic; arrogant, impatient, irascible, Stanton was a terror and a marplot in the conduct of the war.¹ Nothing justified his retention in the administration but his magnificent, unfaltering courage and confidence,—qualities which, in a Cabinet presided over by Lincoln and containing Seward, rendered his presence at times well-nigh indispensable.

The President and his Secretary of War were very much of one mind as to the real cause of the

¹ *Vide*, 2 *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, 103-105.

continued inactivity of the Federal armies. They attributed it without hesitation to the supineness and inefficiency of the generals. Neither Lincoln nor Stanton made any real effort to understand the nature and extent of the harassing and difficult task which Halleck was gradually accomplishing in Missouri; neither of them was willing to recognize the impossibility of undertaking an invasion of East Tennessee by Buell, until, by a movement entered upon jointly by him and Halleck, the hold of the Confederates upon Kentucky and Tennessee should have been loosened; neither of them had the courage to look in the face the fact that the condition of the roads in Virginia made marching in that region by a large army, for the time being, wholly impracticable. They both sought to hold the generals, to whom the conduct of military affairs in these three theatres of war had been entrusted, responsible for the postponement of active operations. Finally, the idea occurred to the President to put an end to this tedious delay by the simple process of issuing a "General Order." This document, which was issued on January 27, 1862, without the knowledge of the General-in-chief, is such a curious specimen of puerile impatience that we give it in full.¹

PRESIDENT'S GENERAL WAR ORDER, NO. 1.

EXECUTIVE MANSION,
WASHINGTON, January 27, 1862.

Ordered, That the 22d day of February, 1862, be the day for a general movement of the land and naval forces of the United States against the insur-

¹ 5 W. R., 41.

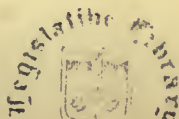
gent forces. That, especially, the army at and about Fortress Monroe; the Army of the Potomac; the Army of Western Virginia; the army near Mumfordsville, Ky.; the army and flotilla at Cairo, and a naval force in the Gulf of Mexico, be ready to move on that day.

That all other forces, both land and naval, with their respective commanders, obey existing orders for the time, and be ready to obey additional orders when duly given.

That the heads of Departments, and especially the Secretaries of War and of the Navy, with all their subordinates, and the General-in-chief, with all other commanders and subordinates of land and naval forces, will severally be held to their strict and full responsibilities for the prompt execution of this order.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

The italics are ours. Why this superfluous order to the troops and their commanders *to obey their orders* is inserted, is not very clear. The soldiers most certainly were not in a mutinous condition. They were only too ready to do what they might be told. We suspect that the sentence was intended for the commanders of the armies; that the President meant to indicate by it that he had got tired of discussing plans of campaign, and that in the future a general who was ordered to take Richmond or Knoxville would be expected to obey at once. It looks as if the President thought that, by this simple expedient, he had got rid of the difficulties in the way of immediate action.



But real difficulties are not overcome by any such devices as this. The issuing of an order does not of itself render roads passable, or troops ready for the march, or the situation favorable for an offensive movement. Much study and careful consideration must be given to any military movements which involve as momentous issues as those which, on January 27th, were prescribed as a sort of celebration of Washington's birthday on the 22d of the ensuing month. President Lincoln soon found that he was in no respect better off for having decreed the day and commanded unhesitating obedience. He soon learned that affairs of first-rate importance cannot be dispatched in such a summary fashion. In fact, he had hardly issued his order, when he became involved in a tedious, anxious, painful, and most unsatisfactory discussion with General McClellan regarding the line of advance of the Army of the Potomac.

The President had long been desirous that a movement should be undertaken by the Army of the Potomac with the object of dislodging the Confederates from Manassas Junction. He had recommended this to General McClellan early in December, 1861, giving him quite in detail an outline of his scheme.¹ McClellan replied that he had reason to believe that the enemy could meet him with nearly equal forces, and that he was now considering another plan of campaign,—that is, a movement by the lower Chesapeake. The subject then dropped. But when Mr. Lincoln conferred with Generals McDowell and

¹ 14 W. R., 6. See also Heintzelman's Memorandum, October 18, 1861; 5 W. R., 622.

Franklin during the illness of General McClellan in January, 1862, he found that they joined in recommending substantially the same movement as that which he had suggested to General McClellan in December.¹ When McClellan recovered, he laid his own plan before the Secretary of War and the President, with the result that the latter not only entirely refused to adopt it, but issued, on January 31, 1862, an order² directing that "all the disposable force of the Army of the Potomac, after providing safely for the defence of Washington, be formed into an expedition for the immediate object of seizing and occupying a point upon the railroad southwestward of what is known as Manassas Junction."

Whether President Lincoln's "orders" were ever intended to serve any other purpose than as starting-points in a discussion of the military situation with General McClellan, we do not know; but it is perfectly plain that they could not have been considered by him as the outcome of a final decision of his own mind. We find him, three days after having issued this "order," writing to McClellan,³ and telling him that if he would give him satisfactory answers to certain questions, he would gladly yield his plan to that of the General-in-chief. These questions were—whether General McClellan's plan did not involve a larger expenditure of time and money, and whether it was so likely to result in victory, or in so valuable a victory, and whether in case of defeat, a retreat

¹ Swinton, 81, 83.

² 5 W. R., 41.

³ *Id.*, 41: February 3, 1862.

could be assured. To these queries McClellan replied, *more suo*, in a long epistle,¹ addressed to the Secretary of War, in which he reviews *in extenso* the history of his command of the army from the time when he assumed it, on July 27, 1861, to the moment of writing. He discusses in detail the operations necessary to seize the point on the railroad southwardly of Manassas Junction. He points out that the condition of the roads is so bad that no period can be fixed for the movement, and that it may be many weeks before it can be begun. He then gives his own plan, which is to transport the army to Urbana on the lower Rappahannock, a place, he says, "easily reached by vessels of heavy draught,—neither occupied nor observed by the enemy,—but one march from West Point, the key of that region,—and thence but two marches to Richmond. A rapid movement on Urbana," he proceeds, "would probably cut off Magruder² in the Peninsula, and enable us to occupy Richmond before it could be strongly re-enforced. Should we fail in that, we could, with the co-operation of the navy, cross the James and throw ourselves in the rear of Richmond, thus forcing the enemy to come out and attack us, for his position would be untenable with us on the southern bank of the river. Should circumstances render it not advisable to land at Urbana, we can use Mob Jack Bay³; or, the worst coming to the worst, we can take Fort Monroe as a base, and operate with

¹ 5 W. R., 42: February 3, 1862.

² Magruder was the Confederate general who held Yorktown and its vicinity.

³ Mob Jack Bay is an arm of the sea, just north of York River.

complete security, although with less celerity and brilliancy of results, up the Peninsula."

There is nothing in this letter,—and it is a very long one,—to indicate that General McClellan thought that the army needed any further experience in camp to fit it for the field. He assumes throughout, that the troops are ready to move at once. There is no difference of opinion between him and the President as to the desirability and feasibility of an immediate movement of the army; the only question is as to the line of advance. General McClellan claims for his plan the recommendation of superior promptness of execution. "We can fix," he says, "no definite time for an advance" on Manassas. "The roads have gone from bad to worse. Nothing like their present condition was ever known here before; they are impassable at present."¹ But a fleet, sufficiently large for the transportation of the army to the lower Chesapeake can be collected, he says, within thirty days from the time when the order is given; and, the troops once landed, operations can be begun at once. "The roads in that region," he says, "are passable at all seasons of the year."²

The President was naturally very averse to this plan of General McClellan's. It involved necessarily a serious risk; for the Army of the Potomac was to be transported from the neighborhood of Washington to the neighborhood of Richmond before the Confederate army had been even attacked, or its strength in any way impaired. That army

¹ 5 W. R., 45.

² *Ib.*, 44. The fact was exactly the reverse.

was then at and near Manassas Junction. It was supposed by General McClellan to be 102,500 strong, and Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley was believed to have 13,000 more.¹ These figures, it is true, were more than twice as large as the facts warranted; Johnston had only 47,096 men, including those on the lower Potomac; Jackson's force numbered only 10,241²; but no one in Washington seems to have suspected the truth. The estimate of General McClellan appears to have been believed not only by him, but by the President and Secretary of War.³ Hence, it could not be expected that the Administration could see without alarm the departure of its main army for parts unknown, while the victor of Bull Run with a hundred thousand men at his back was within thirty miles of the capital.⁴ Every one conceded that the safety of Washington was a matter of paramount importance; but this was necessarily more strongly felt by the President than by the General-in-chief, whose principal anxiety was to secure for the operations of his army the field of his choice.

The subject of the line of advance of the Army of the Potomac was, therefore, fairly before the

¹ McClellan's Report, 5 W. R., 53; Reports of Allen Pinkerton, chief of the Secret Service Corps, *ib.*, 736, 763. General McClellan assumed Pinkerton's figures to be correct.

² Johnston's *Narrative*, 84.

³ Webb, 26.

⁴ It has also been asserted on good authority (Swinton, 86) that the President's opinion, that an advance on Manassas could be undertaken before a movement to the lower Chesapeake could be begun, influenced him against McClellan's plan; but it seems far more probable that the great difficulty with McClellan's scheme in Mr. Lincoln's mind from the very first was that it jeopardized the safety of the capital.

President as early as the 3d of February. "Many verbal conferences ensued," as we are informed by General McClellan¹; on the 14th the Secretary of War invited proposals for vessels; but it was not until the 27th that a decision was arrived at. That decision was in favor of McClellan's plan, and Mr. Tucker, the Assistant Secretary of War, was on that day authorized to collect the vessels needed for the transportation of the army. No formal order was issued; in fact, the order to move on Washington's birthday and the order directing the seizure of a point on the railroad southwestward of Manassas Junction were never formally rescinded; but McClellan was encouraged to suppose that his general plan had received the sanction of the Government, although its details had not been agreed upon.

The President, however, was not free from doubt in his own mind as to the correctness of his decision; and, early in March, he directed General McClellan to call a council of war, consisting of his division commanders. It met on the eighth of that month, and it voted by a majority of eight to four in favor of the movement on Urbana. It was determined also that the army should march to Annapolis, Maryland, and embark there, it being impossible for the transports to run the enemy's batteries on the lower Potomac.²

The same day, the President issued another of his singular "orders," this one being Number 3.³ The

¹ 5 W. R., 45, 46.

² Barnard's testimony, 1 C. W., 387; Sumner's testimony, *ib.*, 360.

³ 5 W. R., 50.

order began by directing that "no change of the base of operations of the Army of the Potomac" should "be made without leaving in and about Washington such a force as in the opinion of the General-in-chief and the commanders of army-corps¹ shall leave said city entirely secure." To this restriction no exception certainly could be taken. That Washington should be provided with a sufficient garrison in the event of the army leaving its immediate vicinity, was assuredly the dictate of common sense.

The order next directs that not more than two corps,—about half the army,—shall be moved away from Washington "until the navigation of the Potomac . . . shall be freed from enemy's batteries."

This direction shows that the President did not agree with General McClellan, that a movement of the army to the lower Chesapeake would necessitate a retreat of Johnston's army and the evacuation of the Confederate batteries on the lower Potomac. And, inasmuch as even Mr. Lincoln must have thought it extremely unlikely that McClellan would undertake any movement with two corps only, we are not surprised to find in the last clause of this document, an express order "that the army and navy co-operate in an immediate effort to capture the enemy's batteries upon the Potomac." For this operation, the period of ten days only is allowed, for it is expressly provided "that any movement . . . *en route* for a

¹ By an order of the same date,—March 8, 1862,—the President had divided the active army near Washington into four corps; 5 W. R., 18. See *post*, 237.

new base of operations, which may be ordered by the General-in-chief and which may be intended to move upon the Chesapeake Bay, shall begin to move upon the bay as early as the 18th of March, instant; *and the General-in-chief shall be responsible that it moves as early as that day.*"¹

Two things in this extraordinary production arrest attention.

The first is the unmistakable tone of suspicion of the General-in-chief, manifest throughout the document. No one would suppose that this paper is an order from a military superior to a military inferior; the paper reads like a manifesto, like a threat, a warning, a statement to some official who has been suspected of attempting to break or evade the law, that he would not be allowed to do it. Viewed in this light, this "order," like its predecessors, merely exhibits Mr. Lincoln's serious defects as an administrator,—as a man of affairs. Had he been equal to his position as Commander-in-chief of the armies of the United States, he would have issued no such document as this; he would simply have ordered the General-in-chief to take as his first task the reduction of the enemy's batteries on the lower Potomac, and to begin it at once. Nothing else was needed.

The second thing we observe here is that the President has substituted a desire for an expedition against the enemy's batteries on the lower Potomac for a desire for a movement against the enemy's position at Manassas Junction, which, as we have seen, he had hitherto pressed upon the attention of the

¹ The italics are ours.

General-in-chief. Why his mind should have undergone this change, it is not easy at first glance to see; for a movement in force on Manassas was almost certain to have the effect of inducing Johnston to abandon his river-batteries and concentrate his forces for battle. The fact probably was that the President, afraid, as he was, of the lower Chesapeake scheme, conceived the idea of ordering McClellan to undertake the reduction of the batteries on the Potomac prior to beginning any expedition down the Bay, in the hope that the Chesapeake scheme would from this or some other reason be abandoned. But in thus proceeding by indirect methods, Mr. Lincoln only involved himself in futile and useless suggestions, and embarrassed the performance of his military duty by the General-in-chief. Mr. Lincoln should have either approved or disapproved of the removal of the army;¹ his decision should have been arrived at without unnecessary delay; it should have been clearly and authoritatively announced; and it should have been adhered to after it had been announced. Threats, whether express or implied, directed against an officer of the army on active duty,—such as are involved in the phrase—“the General-in-chief shall be responsible that it moves on that day”—are in bad taste, wholly unnecessary, and exceedingly impolitic. Disobedience of orders can best be punished by relieving the officer from duty, or, in gross cases, by dismissing him from the service. A threat is unnecessary, because every officer knows what his duty is to his superiors, and what he may

¹ See the admirable criticisms of Swinton, 94.

expect, if he does not perform it. We do not say that an example may not sometimes be necessary ; it is the threat to which we take exception.

Besides the objectionable contents of this order, the fact that it was issued without consultation with the General-in-chief indicates a deplorable lack of confidence in him on the part of the Government. Another instance of the same lack of confidence, and, one may fairly say, an instance of lack of ordinary courtesy, also, was the issuing, on the same day, without the knowledge of General McClellan, of another order, dividing the army into corps, and assigning to each its commander.¹ There had been considerable discussion of this subject between General McClellan and the President and Cabinet ; the former wishing to appoint the corps-commanders himself, but desiring to defer doing so until he should be able to judge of the relative merit of his officers by their actual performance of duty in the field.² The criticism we make is, not that the President decided the matter against the opinion of General McClellan ; it is that he did not frankly tell him that he had done so ; that the first intimation that McClellan had that the matter—which was really one of very great importance—had been decided, was in receiving the order. The fact was, that between McClellan on one side and the President and the Secretary of War on the other, there was anything but a cordial and complete understanding.

What would have happened in consequence of the issuing of the order to take the Potomac batteries, it

¹ 5 W. R., 18.

² *Ib.*, 50.

is useless to inquire ; for it had not been issued twenty-four hours when the Confederates evacuated Centreville, and also all their batteries on the Potomac, thus changing the situation completely. Johnston,—his forces now concentrated,—fell back at first behind the Rappahannock, and, shortly afterwards, behind the Rapidan. He abandoned some heavy guns, and also a considerable quantity of provisions, which, against his expressed wishes, had been accumulated at Manassas Junction by the Confederate commissary general. A large meat-packing establishment, most unwisely located by the same authority at Thoroughfare Gap, on the line of the Manassas Gap railroad, was also abandoned. In fact the whole line of the railroad was given up.

This move was made by General Johnston somewhat earlier than he deemed it advisable to make it, at the express desire of President Davis. The matter was decided on at Richmond on the 20th of February.¹ It was considered that Johnston was too far to the front, and that his position might easily be turned by the Federal commander whenever he might choose to advance. Johnston himself desired to defer falling back until the roads should become better, and make it possible for him to carry off all his artillery and stores, which the limited capacity of the Orange and Alexandria railroad would not permit ; but Mr. Davis thought it wiser to commence the operation at once. No trace whatever of this movement having been occasioned by the discovery that McClellan was intending to proceed to Urbana can be found ; the

¹ I B. & L., 256 ; Johnston's *Narrative*, 96.

step was taken because, on general principles, it was deemed hazardous to expose so small a force as that under Johnston's command to the attack of an army so large as that which it was known McClellan could bring into the field. It may be remarked that the solicitude of President Davis for the safety of Johnston's army was awakened by the serious reverses which the Confederates had sustained in the West by the capture of Forts Henry and Donelson with some 15,000 men on the 6th and 16th of February.¹ It was this, and not any rumor of the movement upon Urbana, which induced the Confederate President to insist on Johnston's retiring as soon as possible to a more secure position.

General Johnston's army evacuated Manassas and its vicinity on the evening of Sunday, March 9, 1862.² It has been generally supposed that this withdrawal of the Confederate army to the Rappahannock occasioned a change in General McClellan's plan for the movement of the Army of the Potomac; that his plan of landing at Urbana was abandoned, because, now that Johnston had placed himself so much nearer Richmond, the expectation of reaching that city "before it could be strongly reinforced," which was one of the recommendations of the Urbana scheme, was not likely to be realized.³ But the fact is, that the Urbana plan had been given up and the plan of taking Fortress Monroe as a base had been

¹ Davis to Johnston, February 19, 1862: "I am very anxious to see you. Events have cast on our arms and our hopes the gloomiest shadows, and at such a time we must show redoubled energy and resolution." 5 W. R., 1077.

² 5 W. R., 526.

³ Webb, 27, 28; Swinton, 90, 91.

adopted on or before March 8th,—that is, before the Confederates evacuated Manassas. General McClellan says in his Memoirs :¹

“The fears of the Administration and their inability to comprehend the merits of the [Urbana] scheme, or else the determination that I should not succeed in the approaching campaign, induced them to prohibit me from carrying out the Urbana movement. They gave me the choice between the direct overland route *via* Manassas, and the route with Fort Monroe as a base. Of course I selected the latter.”

General McClellan does not state the date when this change of plan was decided on; but we find a letter from him to the Secretary of War, dated March 11, which was Tuesday, in which he says :²

“I propose . . . throwing all the forces I can concentrate *upon the line agreed upon last week.*”³ The *Monitor* justifies this course.”

The “week” to which reference is here made began on Sunday, March 2, and ended on Saturday, March 8. It was therefore at some time between these dates that the agreement as to the line of operations was arrived at. The statement that “the *Monitor* justifies this course” is conclusive on the point that it was the line of operations from Fort Monroe as a base which was the subject of the agreement; for it was this line of operations which the unexpected and overwhelming successes of the new Confederate ironclad *Merrimac*, won on March 8th over the *Congress* and *Cumberland* frigates, put in

¹ McClellan's O. S., 227.

² 5 W. R., 742.

³ The italics are ours.

peril, and which General McClellan relied on the *Monitor*, which, on the succeeding day, had withstood the *Merrimac*, to defend and keep available for the operations of his army.

We certainly are not obliged to adopt McClellan's conjecture as to the reasons which induced the Administration to forbid his taking the Urbana route, and to confine him to a choice between the overland route and that from Fort Monroe up the Peninsula. But it is not easy to see why the Urbana route was not preferable to that of the Peninsula in every point of view. The reasons, such as they were, which made Urbana desirable as a base of operations existed in nearly or quite full force, in our judgment, after the retirement of the Confederate army behind the Rappahannock; and it is manifest that the appearance and achievements of the *Merrimac* did not increase the advantages or diminish the risk of making Fort Monroe the base of an advance of the army up the Peninsula.¹

Whatever, however, may have been the reasons, the Government insisted on McClellan's adopting Fort Monroe as a base, and the Peninsula between the James and York Rivers as the line of operations, unless, indeed, he would consent to renounce his favorite project of moving the army to the lower Chesapeake, and would march directly upon Johnston's army. But this latter course McClellan had

¹ The probability is, that the Government thought that McClellan, if compelled to decide between the two, would prefer the overland route to that by way of Fort Monroe, which he himself had designated as one to be adopted only in the event of "the worst coming to the worst." See *ante*, 230.

determined never to adopt. He insisted on his original scheme of removing the army down the Bay, and advancing towards Richmond from the seaboard; and the more difficulties that were thrown in the way of the execution of his plan by his own Government or by the operations of the enemy, the more obstinately he adhered to it. When a project had once become fixed in his imagination, he remained faithful to it, no matter what changes might take place in the circumstances and conditions which existed when the project first took shape in his mind; his predilection for his original scheme was so strong that he could not give to subsequently occurring facts, even when they rendered his scheme a wholly different thing from that which he had originally proposed to himself, their actual value. He was a man who would shut his eyes to inconvenient truths, and would prefer to imagine things other than they really were, if to do otherwise would involve a reconsideration of his views and a reconstruction of his plans.

Now the advantages which Fort Monroe possessed as a base of operations, and which the Peninsula possessed as a line of operations, had been materially diminished by the advent of the *Merrimac* on the scene on the 8th of March. The *Merrimac*, a wooden frigate, had been sunk when the Gosport navy-yard was abandoned in April, 1861. The Confederates had raised her, and had given her a formidable battery. They had completely rebuilt her. Her sides sloped up from the water-line and were covered with heavy iron plates. She was roofed in

like a house. She was fitted with an iron ram. She was indeed a novel and terrible engine of destruction. The Confederates gave her a new name, the *Virginia*.

On Saturday, March 8th, the *Merrimac*, for by this name she is generally known, came out of the harbor of Norfolk and at once made for the frigate *Congress* and the sloop-of-war *Cumberland*. These vessels were lying at anchor off Newport News. They were sailing vessels, excellent of their kind, well armed and equipped, and well officered and manned. The ironclad made short work of both of them. She rammed the *Cumberland*, making a large hole in her, so that she began steadily and rapidly to sink. While the doomed vessel was sinking, her officers and crew fought her with the greatest gallantry and obstinacy. But the shot from the *Cumberland* bounded off the sloping sides of the *Merrimac*, while the latter's more formidable battery soon covered the decks of her antagonist with the dead and dying. The *Cumberland* was fought till she sank, and she sank with her flag flying. The *Congress* was next attacked. Her invulnerable adversary for an hour and more, assisted by two gunboats, raked her fore and aft, and finally set fire to her so that at last she blew up. She, too, was defended with the greatest heroism.

The news of these disasters caused throughout the North the liveliest feelings of apprehension and alarm. There was not, so people supposed, a vessel in the whole fleet capable of dealing with this dreadful and invulnerable foe. But, the very next

day (and this certainly was the most dramatic of the many dramatic occurrences of the war), the little ironclad *Monitor*, under Captain Worden, steamed into Hampton Roads. She was an experiment indeed ; she presented no sides, no bulwarks, to the missiles of her foes ; there was nothing but an iron-plated deck, level with the water, and on it revolved an iron turret containing two formidable guns. She had narrowly escaped foundering at sea, so imperfectly adapted was she for rough weather. But she did escape, and she arrived just in time. On Sunday morning, when the *Merrimac* steamed out of Norfolk, confident of destroying the other United States frigates in the Roads, and was headed towards the *Minnesota*, she was tackled by the little *Monitor*. For two hours and more these iron-clad ships pounded each other. At times the *Merrimac* was able to send her shot into the *Minnesota*, which was aground, doing her considerable, but not fatal, harm, and receiving from her her full broadside, which rebounded from the sloping iron roof and sides of the *Merrimac* without inflicting the slightest injury. Towards the end of the action the pilot-house of the *Monitor* was struck, and Worden was badly hurt. But after a brief delay the vessel returned to the fight, and shortly afterwards the *Merrimac* retired to Norfolk.

Neither the *Merrimac* nor the *Monitor* was seriously injured. But it was sufficiently plain that neither was sure of being more than a match for the other. There was evidently a good deal of allowance to be made for accident in the next encounter.

The *Monitor* had acquitted herself with great credit; but the trial could hardly be considered a decisive one. The Navy Department recognized this fully, for vessels of all kinds were sent to Hampton Roads to render what assistance they could in meeting the formidable Confederate warship. A feeling of comparative security was at last reached; but there was yet great room for legitimate doubt as to the possible future of the *Merrimac*. It was conceded that the James River was closed to Federal vessels; but it was believed that the *Merrimac* could be prevented from destroying the shipping in the Roads, and from going up York River. Any attempt on her part to effect these objects would be resisted by a force which, in the opinion of the United States naval authorities, would be more than she could meet. Such was the situation at Fortress Monroe a few days after the famous battle between the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac*.

Let us return now to General McClellan. The evacuation of the Confederate batteries on the lower Potomac rendered the President's order of March 8th no longer applicable to the circumstances. McClellan called a council-of-war consisting of his four corps-commanders, McDowell, Sumner, Heintzelman, and Keyes. He laid informally his plans before them. They met on the 13th, and decided that, in view of the enemy's having retired from Manassas behind the Rapidan, operations could best be undertaken from Old Point Comfort, or Fort Monroe, provided

1st, "that the *Merrimac*" could "be neutralized";

2d, that sufficient means for transporting the army could be provided;

3d, "that a naval auxiliary force" could "be had to silence, or aid in silencing, the enemy's batteries on the York River"; and

4th, "that the force to be left to cover Washington be such as to give an entire feeling of security for its safety from menace."

Keyes, Heintzelman, and McDowell fixed this force at a full garrison for the forts on the right or western bank of the Potomac, with troops sufficient to occupy those on the left or eastern bank, and an additional covering force of 25,000 men "in front of the Virginia line"; while Sumner estimated that "a total of 40,000 men for the defence of the city would suffice."¹

General McClellan assented at once to the decision of the council; and the Secretary of War, the same day, notified him that the President would make no objection to the "plan agreed upon" by him and the corps-commanders, adding however, directions to leave a sufficient force at Manassas Junction, and to "leave Washington entirely secure."

In compliance with the former direction, which good authorities² have criticised as involving an unnecessary diminution of the active army, McClellan sent a force to the Junction and gave orders for the erection of defensive works there. His own intention was to open the Manassas Gap railroad to the Shenandoah Valley,³ and the order of the President to sta-

¹ 5 W. R., 55, 56.

² Swinton, 95.

³ Williams to Banks, 5 W. R., 56.

tion a competent force at the Junction was, therefore, not opposed to his own views.

As to the garrison of Washington, however, the case was entirely different. McClellan had never assigned an adequate number of troops for this duty. He seems to have been satisfied with building the works which environed the city and suburbs, and which, beyond a question, if properly manned, made Washington capable of a successful defence against any army which the Confederacy possessed. But he never garrisoned these works fully. On January 13, 1862, Barnard, the Chief-of-engineers, wrote to McClellan's adjutant-general,¹ complaining in the strongest terms of the neglect of these forts, twenty-eight of which were without garrisons, and in them 200 guns were mounted. "I look upon the garrisoning of these works," wrote General Barnard, "that is, with artillery-men,—as under all circumstances indispensable, and an absolutely necessary preliminary to any offensive operations of the army. Such offensive operations, if made against distant points, may throw the defence of Washington against the bulk of the enemy's forces upon these works (assisted by reserves); or, as at Bull Run, it is in the range of possibilities that a disaster in the field may paralyze our active army, or throw it back, disorganized, to rally under the protection of these works." Nothing can be sounder than this opinion of General Barnard.

The truth was that McClellan was intent only on preparing a large army for the field. The equally important duty of providing an adequate and properly

¹ 5 W. R., 698.

drilled garrison for the forts and lines of Washington was almost wholly neglected. Yet no one in the army was better qualified than McClellan to put Washington in a state of perfect readiness for any emergency. He unquestionably possessed the requisite skill and technical knowledge. Why then did he not do it,—or seriously attempt to do it? Partly because he thought, or rather chose to think, that it was extremely improbable that works as formidable in appearance as were those which surrounded Washington would ever be attacked, and that therefore, any sort of a garrison for them would suffice, but principally because he believed that the safety of Washington would be assured beyond serious question by the operations against Richmond which he proposed to conduct in person at the head of as large a force as he could possibly muster, and that, therefore, the more men he could take with him and the fewer he left behind, the more likely he would be to succeed, and the more “secure” would Washington be.

Had General McClellan been President of the United States he could have carried out these views with perfect propriety. But he was only a major-general in the army, and the orders under which he was now acting proceeded upon a wholly different theory from that which he himself entertained on this subject. His instructions, contained in the order of March 8th,¹ were to leave in and about Washington such a force as in his own opinion and that of the corps-commanders would leave the city entirely secure. This was reiterated in the order of March 13.

¹ *Ante*, 234.

This done, and a sufficient force left at Manassas Junction, he was authorized to remove the remainder of the army down Chesapeake Bay.

The question of the number of men needed for the garrisons of the Washington forts had been carefully considered as early as October, 1861. On the 18th of that month General Barnard, the Chief-of-engineers, and General Barry, the Chief-of-artillery, were directed by General McClellan to "proceed to determine the minimum strength of garrisons—artillery and infantry—required for the various works in and about Washington to satisfy the conditions of a good defence."¹ On October 24th these officers made their report.² They estimated the total number of men needed for the defence of Washington at 33,795. This number,—increased however, by himself, to 35,000,—was adopted by General McClellan in an elaborate letter to the Secretary of War written in the latter part of October.³ This estimate was an estimate of the garrison required for Washington, and of nothing else; and this was the force which the administration must have supposed it was General McClellan's intention to leave in the works surrounding Washington when he should carry the active army off to Fortress Monroe. The corps-commanders, also, had not varied materially from this estimate when they passed upon the question at the council of the 13th of March.⁴ General Sumner, who asked for 40,000 men, had somewhat exceeded it; the other

¹ 5 W. R., 622.

² *Ib.*, 626.

³ *Ib.*, 9, 10. Cf. McClellan's O. S., 77.

⁴ *Ante*, 245.

three corps-commanders demanded full garrisons for the works south of the Potomac,—which according to Barnard and Barry would require 12,446 men,¹—a sufficient number of troops to occupy the works on the north bank, say, 3000 men,² and a covering force of 25,000,—in all, 40,446 men. We are therefore clearly within bounds if we find 35,000 men to have been the number which General McClellan ought to have left solely for the defence of Washington.³

When we recall the unwillingness of the President to consent on any conditions to the removal of the army down Chesapeake Bay, and the solicitude which he had always manifested for the safety of the Capital, and when we recognize the fact that the leaving of a sufficient garrison in and about Washington had been insisted on by the Government as a condition precedent to its sanction for the Peninsular campaign, it is certainly most difficult to understand why General McClellan should have put off attending to this matter to the last minute before his departure. Yet so it was. His letter to the Secretary of War, announcing the number and description of the troops which he intended to leave for the defence of Washington, was not written until he was on board the steamer *Commodore*, on the point of starting for Fortress Monroe.⁴

¹ 5 W. R., 628. If the three corps-commanders adopted the view of Barnard and Barry that all these works did not require full garrisons, this number would be reduced to 8045, which would make the entire number 36,045.

² 5 W. R., 627.

³ Generals Thomas and Hitchcock found that to carry out the requirements of the corps-commanders would take 55,000 men : 14 W. R., 61.

⁴ 5 W. R., 60.

It is perhaps equally remarkable that the President and Secretary of War did not, in view of the approaching removal of the army to the Peninsula, insist on knowing precisely what troops were to constitute the garrison of Washington and its defences; and it is a strong proof of the unbusiness-like methods which characterized the management of affairs at Washington that this was not done. One would have supposed, also, that the Government would have exercised the greatest care in the selection of the officer who was to command in Washington; but here again we find the most culpable disregard of ordinary common sense. The post was one which should have been entrusted to an educated officer of the regular army,—presumably to an officer of engineers, as the proper discharge of its duties required familiarity with fortifications; but the President gave it to General Wadsworth, a volunteer officer, a man of energy, zeal, and courage, undoubtedly, but of no experience in war and possessing no technical knowledge whatever. McClellan's remonstrances produced no effect at all. Stanton told him "that Wadsworth had been selected because it was necessary, for political reasons, to conciliate the agricultural interests of New York, and that it was useless to discuss the matter, because it would in no event be changed."¹ McClellan's offer of Franklin, one of the best officers in the service, to fill this responsible position, was of no avail.

McClellan's letter of April 1st to Mr. Stanton states that "there would be left for the garrisons

¹ McClellan's O. S., 226.

and the front of Washington, under General Wadsworth, some 18,000, *inclusive of the batteries under instruction.*"¹ This was about half the number which we have seen was required. There is, therefore, no question that McClellan did not obey the orders² of the President, to leave in and about Washington such a force as in the opinion of the corps-commanders would render the city entirely secure; for this service 35,000 men at least, were, as we have seen, required.

McClellan has sought to justify his action in this matter by urging that he left at Manassas and Warrenton and in the Shenandoah Valley a large force, a part of which certainly ought to be counted in among the troops available for the defence of the Capital. This, however, if true, is an admission that he did not do what he was directed to do, but, instead thereof, endeavored to compass the end aimed at by the President's order by doing something else than that which he was directed to do. It is, therefore, no justification for his action. Nevertheless, let us look at his dispositions.

His first plan was to open the Manassas Gap railroad from Manassas to Strasburg in the Shenandoah Valley. He intended that Banks's headquarters should be at Manassas, that the railroad should be repaired, and fortified at the river-crossings, and a permanent work erected at Strasburg. He was, however, obliged, about the middle of March, to re-

¹ 5 W. R., 61. The italics are ours. This sentence shows how Wadsworth's nominal force was eked out.

² *Ib.*, 50; order of March 8, 1862.

tain Banks in the Valley, and to recall to the Valley those of Banks's troops which had begun to move towards Manassas, owing to a daring, though unsuccessful, attack which Jackson had made on Shields's division at Kernstown, near Winchester. But even with this modification of his original scheme, he proposed to leave under General Abercrombie 18,639 men at Manassas and Warrenton, so that, if the enemy should march on Washington, and these troops should be obliged to fall back to the Capital, the force there would be increased to 36,639 men.¹ This, however, could be true only on the supposition that Abercrombie's troops, if driven from Warrenton and Manassas, would be able to effect an orderly retreat to the lines of Washington; and whether they would or would not be able to do this, no one, of course, could say in advance. It is too plain for argument that arrangements,—or perhaps we should say, hopeful expectations,—of this description were not what was intended or ordered by the Government. There is here a clear case of an attempt to evade the performance of the task which General McClellan was in duty bound to carry out. The understanding was, that Washington and the works surrounding it should have a garrison of some 35,000 men,—troops capable of performing the duties of such a position,—and from whom no other duties were to be expected. They were to be in and about Washington, under the command of the Military Governor of the District of Columbia; and

¹ McClellan's O. S., 240, 241. Of these 18,639 men, however, 3500 had not yet left Pennsylvania!

with such a force Washington would undoubtedly be left "entirely secure."

McClellan's letter¹ was dated on April 1st. The very next day Wadsworth wrote to the Secretary of War, stating that he had "present for duty" 19,022 men; that of these he was ordered to send away four regiments to the active army; and to send 4000 more to Manassas and Warrenton; that nearly all his force was imperfectly disciplined,—several regiments being in a very disorganized condition; that heavy artillery regiments, drilled in artillery service, had been withdrawn, and their places filled by new infantry regiments of little or no value in their present position.

This communication was on the same day referred by the Secretary to General Thomas, the adjutant-general of the army, and to General Hitchcock, the military adviser of the War Department, and they reported at once that the requirements of the President and of the corps-commanders had not been complied with. It seems to us that they could not have come to any other conclusion.

We will defer for the present the consideration of the action which the Government took when this violation of his orders by General McClellan in respect to the defence of Washington was discovered. We must, in fact, go back a little, and speak of one or two matters which we passed over for the moment to avoid interrupting the story of McClellan's arrangements.

When it was found that General Johnston had fallen back from Manassas, General McClellan moved

¹ See 14, W. R., 57 *et seq.* for the whole correspondence.

the greater part of his army there, with the view of giving the troops some experience in marching, and that they might be compelled to get rid of their useless baggage. The movement had no other military significance. While he was absent on this duty the President took the opportunity of issuing an order relieving him from the command of all the armies, and restricting him to the control of the Army of the Potomac.¹ The first information which McClellan got of this change in his position was from the newspapers. He wrote at once a very handsome letter to the President, accepting the action of the Government without remonstrance. But the conduct of Mr. Lincoln, in treating the general-in-chief of the army with such scant courtesy, is wellnigh inexplicable.

The President, a little later, did another thing very difficult to understand, and so difficult to justify that we will not attempt the task. He took a whole division—that commanded by General Blenker—from the Army of the Potomac, and transferred it to the army in West Virginia, in command of which he had been persuaded to place General Fremont. This officer was to have another chance, and the President was importuned to give him a respectable force.² There was no military exigency demanding such a

¹ 5 W. R., 54.

² See Mr. Lincoln's letter to McClellan, March 31, 1862,—5 W. R., 58, —and Stanton to Fremont, same date, 18 W. R., 34. See, also, Lincoln to Fremont, June 16, 1862, 15 W. R., 662, from which it appears that Lincoln took Blenker's division from McClellan and gave it to Fremont, because the latter had promised him that, with it, he "would undertake the job" of seizing "the railroad at or east of Knoxville, Tennessee." *Cf.*, 15 W. R., 5, 7; 18 W. R., 8.

step. The Confederates had abandoned West Virginia; the United States troops already there were quite numerous enough to meet any emergency at all likely to arise. On the other hand, the Army of the Potomac was about to undertake an active, aggressive campaign. It was none too large for the task it was attempting. The issue of this campaign, whether successful or unsuccessful, must necessarily be of the first importance. Yet the President, against his own judgment,—for Mr. Lincoln, although not a military man, could understand such a matter as this as well as anybody,—yielded to what he called “pressure,” and sent the division away from its proper place to the mountains of West Virginia.



NOTES TO CHAPTER XII.

1. THAT General McClellan was to blame for not having undertaken a movement in force on Manassas before the winter set in, has been often maintained. The great disparity in force between his army and that of General Johnston has been a favorite weapon in the hands of McClellan's critics. But while every one must admit that McClellan's secret-service department brought him most untrustworthy information, and while we may fairly say that he ought to have known better than to have accepted without hesitation such monstrously exaggerated stories of the strength of his adversaries, a just criticism of McClellan's conduct, as distinguished from a criticism on his lack of sagacity, must proceed on the assumption of the truth of these estimates, because McClellan's course was based on this assumption. McClellan may have been, and we think he was, foolish in believing these estimates to be true, but he would have been yet more foolish, not to say culpable, if, believing them, he had not given to them their full weight in any plan which he was devising. A criticism of McClellan's conduct, therefore, on the basis of the actual size of Johnston's army is beside the mark, for it is admitted, even by the critics, that

McClellan believed Johnston's army to be twice as large as it really was.¹

2. In many,—in fact, in most,—of the criticisms of General McClellan for his inactivity during the autumn of 1861, much stress is laid on the great size of his army. There are, however, two important matters to be considered in this connection.

In the first place, the total force reported as being, on a particular day, at the disposal of the commanding general is too often assumed to consist entirely of troops able to take the field. The necessary deductions from this total are not made. Thus, to take an instance, the total number of troops, present and absent, on the 15th of October, 1861, in and about Washington, including those in and about Baltimore, and on the upper and lower Potomac, is—

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Officially reported ² as | 152,051 |
| Deduct now, the absent | 8,404 |
| the sick | 9,290 |
| those in confinement | 1,156 |
| | <u>18,850</u> |
| And we have left only | 133,201 |
| Deduct now those who were without arms and equipments ³ | <u>12,000</u> |
| And we have left as "present for duty" | 121,201 |
| Deduct now one sixth of these as men on "extra duty" ⁴ | <u>20,200</u> |
| And we have left only | 101,001 |

¹ "He (McClellan) simply added together the aggregates furnished by the guesses of his spies, and implicitly believed the monstrous sum." 5 N. & H., 152. Cf. *ib.*, 176, 177.

² 5 W. R., 12.

³ McClellan's O. S., 77.

⁴ McClellan cites the high authority of the late General Humphreys, chief-of-staff to General Meade, for this estimate,—one sixth,—of the

From this force, garrisons must be found for Baltimore and Washington, troops to guard the upper and lower Potomac, the railways to the Capital, and so forth. McClellan says¹ that in his judgment, 30,000 men is a moderate estimate of the force to be left in and about Washington, that 10,000 should be placed in and about Baltimore, and that 5000 were needed to guard the lower, and 15,000 the upper Potomac,—that is, that 60,000 men in all, should be assigned to guarding the frontier and the communications. This leaves only 41,000 for the active army.

McClellan's estimates of the number of men required for garrison and guard duty may be somewhat excessive, but any consideration of the subject will show that they could not be very much reduced. Only six months before the date of this estimate, Baltimore had been in open rebellion, and the State of Maryland had refused to allow Massachusetts regiments to pass over her soil to go to the defence of the Capital.

But we are not concerned to make out that the figures given above are precisely accurate. We simply wish to call attention to the fact that very considerable deductions must be made under all these heads from the figures officially reported as showing the strength of the army at different dates.

In the next place, we should inquire in what state

whole number "present for duty," as being on extra duty. See McClellan's O. S., 75, 76. For a similar estimate of Confederate returns, see *Jackson's Valley Campaign*, by Colonel Allan, p. 92, n.

¹ McClellan's O. S., 77.

of drill and discipline the troops were in the autumn of 1861, when it is said that an offensive campaign might with advantage have been undertaken. All of them, certainly, were not in a condition for active service. It is not too much to say that it would be wise to exclude from the list of available regiments all those who had not been at least three months in camp. No less a period than this will suffice to get raw troops into a reasonably good state of discipline, to imbue them with military standards of duty, and to give them the priceless advantage of formed habits of soldierly conduct. Unless troops have all these qualifications, it is a great error to suppose them fit for an offensive campaign. Inexperienced and ill-disciplined troops have often been capable of sustaining attacks with steadiness, as were the New England militiamen at Bunker Hill, the Louisiana volunteers at New Orleans, Johnston's raw troops at Bull Run, and Grant's equally raw troops at Shiloh. But they are not fit to enter on an offensive campaign, where strenuous opposition is to be expected.

Now it was not until the middle of January that McClellan had even a "total" of 150,000 men who had been for three months in camp. On the 15th of October he had a "total" of 152,051. This was the "total," the actual value of which we have just been testing by applying to it the necessary deductions, and which we found yielded (in McClellan's judgment) but 40,000 men for the active army. We can, however, in January increase this number by the 12,000 who, in October, were reported as without

arms and equipments. But unless we increase this active army by incorporating into it the troops which arrived in Washington or its neighborhood after the 15th of October, we have only the very moderate force of 52,000 men for our active army in the middle of January. On the first of March, on the other hand, all the troops had been two months in camp, and nearly all had been three months. The whole army was then in admirable condition, well taught, well disciplined, a compact, vigorous, and very formidable force, and ready to take the field.

It seems to us, therefore, that McClellan was perfectly right in deferring active operations on a large scale until the spring, taking into account his estimate of the strength of Johnston's army.¹ But there was no reason why minor movements, such as attempts to capture the enemy's batteries on the lower Potomac, and to capture Norfolk, should not have been made. The success of the expeditions to the Carolinas would indicate that operations of this character would probably have succeeded.

3. It is quite possible that if McClellan had advanced against Manassas in November or the early part of December, and especially if he had threatened Johnston's communications by a movement from the mouth of the Occoquan, or from a point in that neighborhood, as President Lincoln suggested, Johnston, knowing his own weakness, would have retired behind the Rappahannock, losing, very likely, in his retreat, both guns and stores. He would also in

¹ i., *Cf.*, Smith, C. W. P., 40

this event have abandoned all his batteries on the lower Potomac. This, in all probability, would have been all that would have been accomplished by McClellan's move; but this would have been worth a great deal to the country in the way of encouragement and hope; it would have given confidence to the army; it would have raised McClellan's reputation very markedly; and it would have relieved Washington from the humiliation and annoyance of the Confederate blockade of the Potomac. Had McClellan known the actual strength of Johnston's army, he certainly ought to have made such a movement, if the state of the roads had admitted of its being made.

It is, however, extremely unlikely that McClellan would have gained any further advantages over Johnston in the autumn of 1861 than those of which we have spoken. He could not have brought into the field, even as late as the 1st of December, a force of disciplined troops large enough for the exigencies of an active campaign. Moreover, the coming on of winter would very soon have put a stop to active operations. The two armies would probably have gone into winter quarters on the Rappahannock or the Rapidan.

4. General McClellan's letter of April 1st¹ to the Adjutant-General giving the number of troops he proposed to leave for the defence of Washington, for the defence of the Valley, and for the occupation of Manassas and Warrenton, deserves a careful examination. His figures are these :

¹ 5 W. R., 60; 14 W. R., 59.

I. GARRISON OF WASHINGTON.

| | | |
|--|------------|------------|
| Garrisons of the forts around Washington . . . | 10,600 men | |
| Other disposable troops with Wadsworth . . . | 11,400 " | |
| | | |
| Total under Wadsworth | | 22,000 men |
| Wadsworth is to send to Manassas | | 4,000 " |
| | | |
| " There would thus be left for the garrisons and the front of Washington under General Wads- worth, some " | | 18,000 men |

2. FORCE TO BE STATIONED AT MANASSAS.

| | | |
|--|-----------|----------|
| Troops now employed in guarding railways in Maryland | 3,359 men | |
| Troops now in Pennsylvania | 3,500 " | |
| The above mentioned troops to be sent from Washington | 4,000 " | |
| | | 10,859 " |

3. FORCE TO BE STATIONED AT WARRENTON.

| | |
|--|---------|
| Abercrombie's division, Geary's command and cavalry | 7,780 " |
|--|---------|

4. FORCE IN THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY.

| | | |
|------------------------------|------------|----------|
| Blenker's division | 10,028 men | |
| Banks's corps | 19,687 " | |
| Cavalry | 3,652 " | |
| Railroad guards | 2,100 " | |
| | | 35,467 " |

5. FORCE ON THE LOWER POTOMAC.

| | | |
|-----------------|---------|------------|
| | 1,350 " | |
| Total | | 73,456 men |

Let us take up the items of this account in their order.

1. General Wadsworth reported on April 2d to the Secretary of War that he had only 20,477 men (including 1455 sick and in confinement). Here is

a discrepancy of about 1,500 men. General Wadsworth's figures are probably the more accurate.

2. We cannot consider that General McClellan was justified in including in any serious calculation the 3,500 men whom he had learned from Governor Curtin were "now ready in Pennsylvania." Such troops were necessarily raw and absolutely inexperienced.

3. The 7,780 men under Abercrombie and Geary and the cavalry with them belonged to the corps of Banks. See Banks's letter to the Adjutant-General of April 6, 1862.¹ They are estimated by Banks at a strength of 6,300 men, instead of 7,780.

4. Blenker's division was only temporarily in the Valley. It was under orders to proceed to join Fremont in the Mountain Department.

The estimate of Banks's corps—19,687—and cavalry—3,652—together 23,339, agrees sufficiently with the statement of Banks himself in the above-cited letter. He says his strength is about 23,000. But in this estimate he includes the 6,300 men under Abercrombie and Geary, and the cavalry with the latter officer. See his "Statement" subjoined to his letter.²

General McClellan has therefore counted in the troops of Abercrombie and Geary twice over. He should have deducted from his 23,339 men the force attributed by him to Abercrombie and Geary, 7,780 men.

We do not for an instant imagine that this was done intentionally by General McClellan. But it is

¹ 18 W. R., 48, 50.

² *Ib.*, 50.

such a piece of gross carelessness that it deserves to be exposed. It shows the haste in which the statement was prepared.

It is too plain for argument that General McClellan did not give to the subject of the defence of Washington that strict and conscientious attention which its importance demanded, and which a man of the highest character would have given to it,—all the more because the matter was one which did not directly affect his own contemplated operations in the field. Moreover the whole story shows how short-sighted was McClellan's course. It is more than likely that if he had attended to this part of his duty as carefully and thoroughly as he should have done, he never would have had occasion to complain of the interference of the Administration with his plans.

5. The question of the wisdom of removing the army from the neighborhood of Washington to the neighborhood of Richmond may well demand our consideration.

A. McClellan's original scheme, it will be remembered, was to march his army from Washington and its vicinity to Annapolis in Maryland, where it was to embark for Urbana. This he proposed to do, although Johnston, with an army which McClellan himself estimated at over a hundred thousand men, was encamped at Centreville and Manassas, only thirty miles from Washington. It was certain to take two or three weeks, and not unlikely to take four or five, to transport the 140,000 men who composed McClellan's army to their destination

on the lower Rappahannock.¹ During this time Johnston would,—so McClellan expected,—be occupied in withdrawing his army and stores to the neighborhood of Richmond; but McClellan expected to be beforehand with his antagonist, and “to occupy Richmond before it could be strongly reinforced.”²

But, in the first place, who could be sure that Johnston would take this view of his true course under the circumstances? Who could be certain that he would not content himself with sending 20,000 men to Richmond, and then, after the bulk of the Federal army had embarked, cross the Potomac at the head of 80,000 men, and march on Baltimore or Philadelphia?³ No one can doubt that such a step would be followed by the instant recall of McClellan. In such an emergency, the President and his advisers could not afford to hesitate a moment; and they would not have hesitated. McClellan’s campaign would have been abruptly brought to an end, but very probably not before the prestige of the Union had received a serious blow. It is true that we now know that Johnston, instead of having 100,000 men, had hardly half that number; but in passing upon McClellan’s plan we must assume the correctness of the figures which he accepted as correct. That Johnston made no offensive movement of this kind was probably due to the fact that his force was so small.

¹ It took about five weeks to transport 120,000 men to Fort Monroe. 5 W. R., 46.

² McClellan to Stanton, 5 W. R., 45.

³ This plan was suggested as late as the middle of April. Smith, C. W. P., 42. Cf. Johnston to Lee, April 30, 1862; 14 W. R., 477.

In the second place, what likelihood was there that McClellan, who had to embark and disembark his army, could "occupy Richmond before it could be strongly re-inforced," considering that Johnston had direct rail communication with that city, and that the distance was only 130 miles by way of Gordonsville? The idea is simply preposterous, and McClellan's statement only shows how inexact and careless he could be in advocating a plan which had once enlisted his imagination on its side. McClellan, it must not be forgotten, as we have just said, fully expected that Johnston would fall back on Richmond; and it was in this race for the Confederate capital that he said that he would probably outstrip his antagonist.

The utmost, therefore, that McClellan could expect to accomplish by the Urbana plan, which was, as he said himself,¹ by far the best of his plans, would be to place his army in the course of a few weeks in the immediate neighborhood of Richmond, where he could have his supplies brought by water for the greater part of the distance. He would then have Johnston's army in front of him, largely reinforced, in all probability, for the struggle which it was plain^u must take place for the possession of the Confederate capital.

B. The case against McClellan is even stronger in regard to the Peninsular plan. When he determined to adopt Fort Monroe as a base, the *Merrimac* had come out, and the James River was not open as a channel of supply for his army. Nor was this all.

¹ Letter to Stanton, 5 W. R., 45.

The York River was closed by batteries at York and Gloucester, where the stream is less than a mile wide. Moreover, the strength of the *Merrimac*, the amount of harm she could do, if properly handled and measurably favored by fortune, was absolutely undeterminable, but it was certain that she was the most formidable war-vessel afloat. If there was one place on the coast more perilous than another, to fix upon as a rendezvous for some three hundred¹ transports carrying a great army, that place was Fortress Monroe. But McClellan had been forbidden to adopt the Urbana plan; and, sooner than yield to the wishes of the Government and take the overland route, he ordered his army, the only army on the Atlantic seaboard, to be carried by water to Hampton Roads, where the terrible and invulnerable Confederate ironclad had so recently destroyed two of the finest vessels in the Federal navy. There can be no question in regard to the danger which McClellan in this matter deliberately incurred. He asked the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Fox, a naval officer himself, if he could "rely on the *Monitor* to keep the *Merrimac* in check, so that" he could "make Fort Monroe a base of operations,"² and Fox told him³ that while "the *Monitor*" was "more than a match for the *Merrimac*, she might be disabled in the next encounter," and he could not "advise so great dependence upon her." It is true Fox went on to say⁴ that he thought the *Merrimac* did not intend to pass by Fort Monroe, and that he was of

¹ 5 W. R., 46.

² 9 W. R., 27.

³ 9 W. R., 27.

⁴ McClellan's O. S., 249.

opinion that she would be taken if she did undertake to pass by the fort, and that he thought that this was "sure enough to make any movement upon." But this was all, and it was certainly very general, and anything but definite and satisfactory. And when one considers the enormous interests at stake,—when one thinks of the fleet,—or successive fleets rather,—of unprotected transports containing thousands and thousands of brave men on their way to the seat of war,—when one remembers the terrible and deadly work which the formidable iron-clad had just shown herself able to accomplish with impunity,—one cannot help being amazed at McClellan's decision. "I have," he wrote the next day to Fox, "such a living faith in the gallant little *Monitor* that I feel that we can trust her; so I have determined on the Fort Monroe movement."¹ The language of this note shows, more plainly than anything else could, the extent to which McClellan was continually influenced by his imagination, and his constitutional inability, for such it really seems to have been, to meet grave problems with the sobriety and feeling of responsibility, and clear and vigorous sense, which a man in such an important position ought assuredly to possess.

Both the Urbana and the Peninsular projects were open to very grave objections, and no experienced and sagacious man of affairs in McClellan's place would ever have thought seriously of adopting either of them, if he entertained the same opinion as to the strength of Johnston's army which was held

¹ I C. W., 629; McClellan to Fox.

by McClellan. Besides the danger, of which we have spoken above, that Johnston might invade the North while the Army of the Potomac was being transported to the lower Chesapeake, a move which he very likely would have made had he had (as was supposed) 100,000 men under him, there was the determined opposition of the President and of most of the Cabinet to reckon with. They desired McClellan to go out and attack the enemy at Manassas, or wherever else he could be found, and, in our judgment, they were quite right. The first battle had been most unfortunate; it had ended in a discreditable panic; it was but natural, and it was very right and proper, that the Government and the people should expect that their general and their army would seek the first opportunity to retrieve their tarnished reputation. McClellan's elaborate strategy, even if it had been sound (which it certainly was not), was out of place here; the balance between the Federal and Confederate power could be righted only by a battle. The enemy, even if behind the Rapidan, were comparatively close at hand; we had a powerful, well organized, well disciplined army; there was no reason in the world why we should not go out and fight them. This was the demand of the people, and it was a natural and reasonable demand, and the President and Secretary were quite right in giving it expression. McClellan should have fallen in with it cheerfully, and have carried it gallantly and promptly into execution. There was an excellent chance before

him of winning a decisive victory. As Swinton¹ well points out, this was not a case of a general being required to undertake "the execution of a plan which he considers faulty. . . . The scheme of an advance against Manassas² cannot be called 'faulty,' or of a kind to hazard the ruin of the army."

McClellan showed his lack of knowledge of the world in insisting with such obstinacy on his own scheme when he ought to have known that the constant, cordial, and unfaltering support of the Administration must be a condition essential to his success, no matter what plan he might adopt. This support he wilfully forfeited at the outset, and he did so, knowing perfectly well that he was doing so.

Again, what judicious officer would fail to take note of the fact that the embarrassments and difficulties which always beset untried troops, when they take the field for the first time, would inevitably be multiplied by embarking and disembarking them, and by operating in a country hitherto unknown, and where everything in the matter of communications and subsistence had to be extemporized?³ And when one takes into account that McClellan had no accurate knowledge either of the topographical features of the Peninsula, or of the

¹ Swinton, 97.

² The same would be true of an advance against an enemy lying behind the Rapidan.

³ See McClellan to Thomas, April 9, 1862; 14 W. R., 84; also Assistant Secretary Tucker's letter to Mr. Stanton, April 10 [11], 1862, in McClellan's O. S., 275; 14 W. R., 90.

positions occupied by the enemy,¹ one is really lost in amazement at the presumption which could deliberately and unnecessarily select such a task for an untried army.

6. A brief comparison of McClellan's movement with similar operations may not be out of place.

The one which it most resembles was that of General Sir William Howe in July and August, 1777. That officer, apparently unable to bring Washington to a battle in New Jersey, retired to Staten Island, and put his army on transports,—sailing vessels, of course,—and, passing round Cape Charles, sailed up Chesapeake Bay, at the head of which he landed. He then marched for Philadelphia, encountering and defeating Washington on his way thither in the action known as the battle of the Brandywine. Howe has always been blamed for his course in this regard, and especially for the unnecessary exposure of his army to the dangers of the sea.

The movement up the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers suggested by Buell and undertaken by Grant, in February, 1862, does not in the least resemble McClellan's movement to the Peninsula. The main army,—that under Buell,—marched against that of Sidney Johnston; it was only an expeditionary force which, under Grant, was transported on the rivers and captured Forts Henry and Donelson.

There was an expedition up the Peninsula undertaken in July, 1863, while General Lee was in Pennsylvania. Dix, who commanded at Fort Monroe,

¹ McClellan's O. S., 289.

was ordered to cut Lee's railroad communications with Richmond, a task which was to a certain extent accomplished, although with no important results.¹

There was also an expeditionary movement up the James River in May, 1864, made by General Butler at the head of about 35,000 troops. He landed at Bermuda Hundred, and, after one or two ineffectual and disastrous attempts to move upon Richmond, fortified his position, and awaited the arrival of the main army under Grant.

In regard to these expeditions under Dix and Butler, (as well as in regard to that under Grant in Tennessee), it must be remembered that the main Federal army was all the time confronting the main Confederate army. The idea of leaving the main Confederate army in front of Washington, and transporting the Army of the Potomac to the lower Chesapeake, was peculiar to General McClellan.

7. It ought perhaps to be said for General McClellan that the best season for taking the field in Northern Virginia had not arrived when he was compelled to make his decision. The roads are very bad in the month of March, everywhere in Virginia. This fact ultimately became known to the President and Cabinet, for we find Hooker deferring, without complaint, the opening of the Chancellorsville campaign till the last week of April, 1863, and General Grant not crossing the Rapidan in 1864 until the 3d of May. But in 1862 the Administration seem to have been utterly intolerant of the fact that the roads in Virginia were wholly unfit for the move-

¹ See 43 W. R., 17, 18.

ment of a large army at least until the middle or end of April. Whether McClellan would have been willing to undertake the overland route had he been allowed to wait until he considered the ground sufficiently hard, may, however, be doubted.

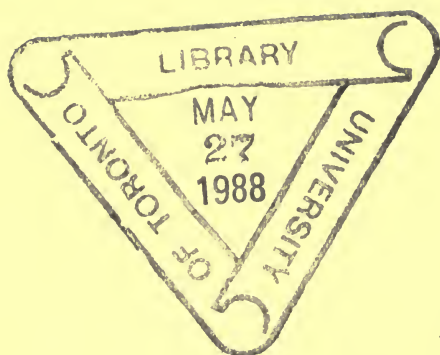


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